



# WHY CRIPPS FAILED

BY

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NEW DELHI.

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## DATE FILE FOREWORD

ENFORCED leisure imposed both in the press and staff by the voluntary suspension of publication of the *Hindustan Times* has made it possible for this pamphlet to be produced. It lays no claim to the authority of anyone outside the *Hindustan Times*, much less the Congress. But the views expressed in these pages by Mr. M. Subrahmanyam, who was in a position to follow the Cripps negotiations from close quarters, do reflect average nationalist opinion in India. They will, therefore, command due attention. No one in this country will be disposed to blame the failure on Sir Stafford Cripps alone. If there has been very caustic comment against him, some from those whom he counted amongst his best friends, the reason lies in some of the statements he made in the aftermath of controversy. Yet he alone, among the many British official spokesmen, laid stress on the need for avoiding rancour after the failure of the negotiations. The others with silent but characteristic disdain repudiated his tenderness and were glad to be able to use the bludgeon again. Weeks after the negotiations I had occasion to meet the representative in New Delhi of a leading British newspaper. He did not mince words. "I do not think," he said, "that His Majesty's Government had any faith in those proposals. They let him come out with them because they thought they would do no harm." In other words, a temporary upsurge of British public opinion had forced the Cabinet to compromise with Cripps on India. But being more conversant than Sir Stafford Cripps himself with the prevailing phase of representative Indian opinion, some of his colleagues of the group which controls Indian policy in the Cabinet certainly got the better of the give and take. Sir Stafford could not have known, so well as did Mr. Amery, that India, alarmed at the prospect of a discontented and unorganized people falling an easy prey to Japan, regarded immediate freedom as more vital than a promise of future independence. He came out to India with the dice already loaded against him. That he is now sent out of the War Cabinet confirms the story. The official remark in New Delhi too, when the proposals were made known, was that there was no danger of their acceptance in India.

The existence of a strong section of opinion in this country which holds that on grounds of expediency the Congress should have accepted the proposals must be admitted. But the obvious reply is that the Congress Working Committee tried its best to arrive at a compromise with Sir Stafford Cripps in full consciousness of the situation. The break came in spite of this. Nor was there any knowing that even if the Congress pocketed its pride in respect of many a point of vital principle in the hope of ultimate

fulfilment, the Muslim League and the other bodies would have obliged. And by the consequent lack of "general" agreement Sir Stafford would still have faced discomfiture at the hands of those in England who saw the liquidation of Empire in his unimperialistic ideology. In the result everyone of note, both in India and England, except Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery and those who enjoy and depend upon their patronage, finds himself placed in the most awkward position imaginable. It was a resounding triumph for someone.

The next step was to put the Congress out of the picture and to prepare for the defence of India both against Japan and itself. Again the old imperialist guard had nothing to lose. It was their normal programme. Although they did not quite anticipate it, the actual loss of thousands of Indian lives by shooting and the effect of floggings, imprisonments and collective fines on the masses of Indians did not and does not worry them. For propaganda purposes, however, they are anxious to place the blame on Congress leaders. With nearly a hundred thousand men and women in jail there is today no spokesman available who may be competent to speak on behalf of the Congress. But as one who has long had the privilege of intimate contact with Congress leaders I take the liberty of recording here a little significant history which has an important bearing on the question. The All-India Congress Committee at Bombay adopted its resolution on the general situation at about 8 p.m. on 8th August. I spoke on the long distance telephone later that night to a friend in Bombay. He told me that everybody had gone to bed after a busy and animated session. When I asked about the next step, he told me that just before retiring Gandhiji had, in the course of private discussion, announced his intention to make every effort to avoid a conflict and in any case to wait for three weeks at least before advising action. At the very time that Gandhiji was thus unfolding in Bombay his plan of conciliation, the Viceroy's Council in New Delhi, at one of its extraordinary nightly sittings, was busy filling in the details on a decision arrived at some three weeks ago to put the Congress Working Committee under arrest as soon as the A.I.C.C. adopted its resolution. In sealing its earlier decision the Government felt it no part of its duty to take into account the altered situation created by the numerous public statements made by responsible leaders in the preceding week. A long term policy had evidently been sanctioned and no thought of dangerous consequences could stand in the way of its execution. When the police party turned up in the early hours of the morning, Gandhiji was literally surprised. The grave disorders which spread immediately all over the country still continue in sporadic form. I for one was convinced from the very beginning, and I said so to foreign correspondents who cared to see me then, that the outbreak was not only spontaneous but would, on that very account, be serious. To speak of Congress responsibility for the violence and loss of life (caused by the Government's military measures of the severest type)

adds grave insult to injury. The position becomes ridiculous when the accusation is smugly levelled at leaders who were securely put away behind prison walls before the game of violence and counter-violence had started and are still being kept there hermetically sealed against all contact with the outside world. They have no means of reply except through private petitions for mercy. Justice stands betrayed and so does the cause of the Allies in India.

DEVADAS GANDHI.

NEW DELHI,  
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## PREFACE

WHY did Sir Stafford Cripps fail? The question, perhaps, is easier asked than answered. A lot of interested propaganda is, however, being carried on to throw the responsibility for the failure of the Cripps mission on the Indian National Congress, and especially Mahatma Gandhi. What justification is there for this charge and how far can the Congress be said to be responsible for wrecking the hopes of millions not only in this country but among all those comprising the United Nations? For the Indian question, by the time the decision to send the then Lord Privy Seal to India was reached, had become not only a matter of interest to India and Great Britain but the concern of the whole world. By March 11, 1942, when Mr. Churchill made the announcement about the dispatch of the mission, the war in the Far East had taken a turn which invested developments in India with immense strategic significance. The Japanese had overrun the whole of Malaya and part of Burma. Singapore fell on February 15, and British forces evacuated Rangoon on March 7. For the first time since the British came to India, the country was faced with the possibility of invasion, both by land and sea. The internal controversy between the Congress and the Government had reached an acute stage—all the measures taken by the Government to meet the situation created by the non-co-operation of the Congress in the war-effort having proved unavailing. Would Indians face invasion, if it came, as a united people backing a Government which possessed their complete confidence, or would disunity among the different sections of the Indian people and distrust of the Government make of India as easy a prey for the Japanese as Burma or Malaya? The United Nations were fully aware of the importance of India as a base of operation, both defensive and offensive, in the war against Japan. With Rangoon in Japanese hands, the Burma Road had practically become useless to China as a channel for getting war supplies from America and Britain, and China knew that she would have to look to India for keeping open communications with the outside world. The Axis countries were also not unaware of these developments, and the searchlight of international publicity turned towards India made it impossible for Britain not to do something to conciliate Indian opinion in order to secure its more hearty co-operation in the war-effort and to put herself right in the eyes of the United States and her other Allies who did not look kindly on her handling of the Indian situation since the second World War began.

Since Sir Stafford Cripps left India a disappointed man, much material relevant to the controversy has come to light. But we must know a great deal more of what took place behind the scenes during the negotiations before we can be certain as to what really happened and where responsibility must be placed for the breakdown of the

negotiations. Meanwhile, all that can be done is to marshal known facts and arguments and allow the world to draw its own conclusions from them. In spite of the frantic attempts being made to place the responsibility for the failure of the mission on the Congress, even the facts which have come to light so far seem to show that others must shoulder the blame for the result. Clever and well-organized propaganda may succeed in deceiving the world for a time, but it will not succeed in duping all the world all the time. There appears to be a danger, however, of the Indian nationalist case being lost through default. That case will lose nothing but gain a great deal by a sober presentment of it before the bar of Indian and world opinion. The object of this volume, in addition to stating relevant facts, is to place before the public as clearly and succinctly as possible what Indian nationalist, and especially Congress, opinion stood for during the negotiations.

# I GREAT EXPECTATIONS

WHEN Mr. Churchill made his announcement in the House of Commons on March 11, 1942, that the War Cabinet had agreed unitedly upon conclusions for present and future action in India which they considered "a just and final solution," and that the Lord Privy Seal would be going to India soon to secure the assent of Indian leaders to these proposals, the news was widely welcomed in India, with no one striking a jarring note. All sections felt that at last a genuine attempt was about to be made by the British Government to settle the Indian question finally. The pace of international developments had brought wisdom, it was thought, to persons who had so long proved impervious to counsels of prudence. Mr. Churchill's appeal that no words should be spoken or debates held in Britain or India which would add to the difficulties of the mission or lessen the prospects of good result, met with a generous response from the press and the public. From the time Mr. Churchill made his announcement to the time Sir Stafford Cripps arrived at New Delhi and showed his proposals to the Viceroy's Executive Council, no word was spoken or written in this country which could be said to have affected adversely the chances of success of his mission. There was realization everywhere of the greatness of the occasion, the importance of the issues at stake and the delicate and complicated nature of the negotiations on which Sir Stafford Cripps, already personally popular in India, was about to embark and no one wanted to do anything likely to make more difficult an already difficult situation.

It was, therefore, in this atmosphere of friendliness, such as had never before greeted another of his countrymen, that he landed from his plane at New Delhi on March 23 and proceeded the same afternoon to a Press conference which he had called. The manner in which he handled that and the subsequent Press conferences came as a breath of fresh air in the rather stuffy atmosphere of New Delhi.

At this Press conference, the goodwill with which his mission had started may be said to have attained its peak. Thereafter, his mission became a running fight put up by him to save his scheme from suffering complete shipwreck. There were moments during the negotiations when it looked as though he had very nearly succeeded, but in the final form in which his scheme emerged at the end of the negotiations, there was no hope of its proving acceptable to Indian opinion. If that picture had been before the Indian public when the Prime Minister first announced the dispatch of the Cripps mission, it would have expressed itself in no uncertain terms. Incidentally, the increased bitterness which crept into the relations between India and Britain as a result of the manner in which the breakdown occurred might also have been avoided.

## II DISMAY AND DISAPPOINTMENT

**I**MMEDIATELY after his arrival at New Delhi, Sir Stafford Cripps went to the Viceroy's House, where he stayed for two days. Here he met the different Provincial Governors who had come up to New Delhi to see him, and also appraised the members of the Viceroy's Executive Council of his proposals. Thereafter, on Wednesday, March 25, he moved into his own quarters at No. 3, Queen Victoria Road. Here on the same day, he met the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and later Mr. Jinnah, the President of the All-India Muslim League. To both of them he gave copies of his Draft proposals and explained orally their significance. Throughout that week, he met the leaders of different parties including the Sikhs, the Indian Christians, the Princes, the States' Subjects, etc., and gave them too a copy of the Draft proposals.

Till the moment of Sir Stafford Cripps' arrival, there was little or no criticism of the decision of the British Government to keep the proposals confidential till such time as they had been communicated to Indian leaders. But soon after Sir Stafford's arrival in Delhi ominous reports got abroad about their real nature. As the week progressed and the scheme got into the hands of a large number of leaders who, in most cases, had to take the members of their Working Committees into their confidence, "intelligent anticipations" began to appear in different sections of the press. One of the earliest reports about the scheme was that it contemplated the possibility of several Federations. Another disclosure was that Defence would continue to be reserved to His Majesty's Government. The effect of these disclosures on the public mind, keyed to a high pitch of expectation, could scarcely be exaggerated. All the high hopes of the scheme proving the basis of an honourable settlement between Great Britain and India came crashing down. There was dismay and disappointment. How could Sir Stafford have believed, it was argued, that such a scheme could become the basis of discussions with Indian leaders. Even Sir Stafford Cripps felt that the scheme could not be kept a secret much longer.

On March 29, at one of the largest Press conferences held in this country, Sir Stafford Cripps handed over copies of the Draft Declaration to the assembled representatives. He then answered the hundreds of searching questions showered at him from all sides. It was a gallant attempt to stem the tide which had already started flowing against him, and it was a tribute to his ability and agility that he very nearly succeeded in convincing his audience that the scheme was, after all, not so bad as the forecasts had made it out to be. The provinces had, indeed, for the first time, secured the right to stay away from Federation, and even form an alternative Federation of their own. Defence, it was true, continued to be reserved as the responsibility of His Majesty's Government. But the scheme had some attractive features. With further elucidation of obscure points, some difficult negotiations and even hard bargaining, it was thought it might be licked into acceptable shape. This was the first reaction in the country to the Draft Declaration.

### III THE DRAFT DECLARATION

THE Draft Declaration consisted of a Preamble and the text which contained five clauses. The Preamble stated that in view of the anxieties created in Britain and India about the fulfilment of promises made in regard to the future of India, His Majesty's Government had decided to lay down "in precise and clear terms" the steps which they proposed should be taken for the earliest possible realization of self-government in India. "The object," it then proceeded to state, "is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion associated with the United Kingdom and other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or external affairs."

The text dealt with two separate aspects of the problem, namely, how the new Indian Union was to be formed after the war and what ought to be done now to secure the effective participation of the people in the defence of their country. "Immediately after the cessation of hostilities," a constitution-making body was to be set up to frame the new constitution. This body was to be elected by all the members of the Lower Houses of the Provincial Legislatures, after the results of the provincial elections to be held after the war were known, by the system of proportional representation. The number was to be one-tenth of the total strength of the Lower Houses of Provincial Legislatures. Indian States were to appoint representatives in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of representatives of British India as a whole and with the same powers as the British Indian members. The composition of the constitution-making body could, however, be varied by agreement among the leaders of the principal Indian communities.

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HARD NUTS

*The Hindustan Times*  
16-3-42

His Majesty's Government undertook to accept and implement a constitution so framed, subject only to two conditions. The first of these conditions was the right of any province not prepared to accept the new constitution to retain its present constitutional position, leaving it free to accede to the Union subsequently if it so desired. With such non-acceding provinces, His Majesty's Government declared their willingness to agree, if they so desired, upon a new constitution arrived at by an analogous procedure and to give them the same status as the Indian Union. The second proviso was about a treaty, to be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body, to cover matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands and to provide for the protection of racial and religious minorities, in accordance with the previous undertakings given by the British Government. The treaty, however, was not to "impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in future its relationship to other member States of the British Commonwealth." It was pointed out that under the new conditions, it would be necessary to negotiate revision of treaty arrangements with Indian States whether they acceded to the Union or not.

All these related to the uncertain future, after the war. But what about the only too real present? Clause (e) of the Draft Declaration which dealt with the present was extremely vague, except on one point. It stated categorically that until the new constitution was framed, the British Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war-effort. To the Government of India, however, was assigned the task of "organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India," with the co-operation of the "peoples of India." His Majesty's Government, the Draft Declaration proceeded, desired and invited the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations, to enable them to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which was vital and essential for the future freedom of India. What form this effective participation was to take, there was no indication.

#### IV DOMINION STATUS AND COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE

THE Preamble to the Draft Declaration which defined the status of the new Indian Union, taken in conjunction with Clause c (ii), though circumlocutory and therefore suspect, was regarded in several quarters, and notably by the press, as setting at rest the long controversy about the ultimate objective of British rule in India. The Draft not only described the status of the Union in the actual words of the Inter-Imperial Relations Committee of the Imperial Conference of 1926, over which the late Lord Balfour presided, but by refusing to impose any restriction on the power of the



Indian Union to decide its future relationship with other members of the British Commonwealth recognized the right of the Indian Union to secede from the Commonwealth, if it so desired. At the Press conference which he addressed on March 29, Sir Stafford Cripps described the Constituent Assembly as "a sovereign body" which could start with a declaration of independence. It could abolish the office of the Governor-General, if it wanted to do so. There would be no reservations as regards the Services or British commercial interests. The Indian Union would be free to take all measures open to a sovereign state, including even expropriatory measures, though Sir Stafford hoped that the Union would do no such thing. There would be no Imperial troops in the country, except at the request of, or by agreement with, the new Indian Union or Unions. In short, the new Indian Union would be as free as any country within the British Commonwealth or outside it. By defining the status of the Indian Union in these terms, the British Government had evidently been brought round by Sir Stafford to the view that they should not only remove all doubts about India being given the same status as the other Dominions but also put an end to the controversy about Dominion Status and Complete Independence.

This part of the Draft Declaration was easily its most attractive feature from the Indian point of view, and if during the discussions at Delhi it did not seem to get the recognition it deserved at the hands of the Indian leaders, it was partly due to the setting in which it appeared, but more particularly because international developments had made the present far more important to them than the future. After the fall of France, the German successes in Russia and the easy manner in which Japan had overrun Malaya, Burma and the Dutch East Indies, the feeling among all sections in India was that the trusted leaders of the people should be at the helm of affairs to pilot the country during the critical times ahead and that promises about the future were of little or no value if there was no present transfer of power. The course of the war had shown up the shortcomings of the Government's defence policy in a new light. Indian defence arrangements had always been based on the calculation of receiving reinforcements from abroad when a major threat developed. This was inherent in the policy of holding down a population of nearly 400 million mainly by keeping it disarmed. But the risk involved in the plan materialized rather unexpectedly in the present war and India was thrown largely on her resources. These resources had not been developed with a view to enable the country to equip and maintain a modern mechanized army on its own soil, drawing all necessary supplies from the country. The north-west had always been looked upon as the direction from which a threat of invasion might come. In actual fact, danger threatened the country from the north-east and south. India had neglected the development of a navy of her own, relying

on the British Navy to guard her shores. But the Battle of the Atlantic kept the greater part of the fleet elsewhere, while the sinking of the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* threw open the Indian waters to the Japanese Fleet. It was a situation which called for the immediate mobilization of the nation's full resources and there was wide agreement that such mobilization could take place only with popular leaders at the helm of affairs at the centre. But failure to recognize this psychological change in public opinion which had taken place since the beginning of the war was ultimately to prove fatal to the success of Sir Stafford Cripps' mission.

The situation when war broke out in 1939 was that India had been promised Dominion Status as a goal to be attained at some indefinite future, but there was no knowing how long it would take her to reach it. The object with which Britain and France declared war on Germany, the prevention of wanton aggression, the protection of the rights of small nations to live their own free lives, etc., gave a fillip to the Indian demand for freedom. If the professions of the democratic powers were sincere, there should be no hesitation in meeting the Indian claim. The Congress wanted that the principle of Indian independence should be recognized, and given effect to after the war, and some substantial step taken immediately in order to give effective voice to Indian leaders in the government of the country. The Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, after interviewing 52 people made a statement which followed the traditional British policy of conceding less than what the most moderate had demanded. That statement, reiterated the old promise about Dominion Status, without mentioning any time-limit for its realization, and said that the Act of 1935 which had been rejected by all sections would be modified after the war in consultation with Indian opinion, and proposed the formation of a Consultative Committee consisting of representatives of parties, over which the Viceroy would preside, as the best way of securing the association of Indian leaders in the conduct of the war. The position was most unsatisfactory and left everybody cold and resentful. Men of good-will felt dejected at this failure to rally India for the democracies. Nor were matters improved by the now well-known Declaration of August 8, 1940, inviting representative Indians to join the Viceroy's Council and authorizing the establishment of a War Advisory Council. The Declaration also stated that the British Government would not transfer their responsibilities to any system of Government whose authority was directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. The Government further expressed their sympathy with the desire that the framing of the new constitution should primarily be the responsibility of Indians and their wish to see it given the fullest practicable expression subject to the due fulfilment of the "obligations" which Great Britain's long connection with India had "imposed" upon her.

The Cripps Declaration was the first serious attempt, thirty months too late, made by any one to tackle the Indian question from the broad point of view of global strategy. It was a definite advance

on the earlier position. The draft promised full freedom after the war, with right of secession from the Commonwealth admitted in advance. It laid down the steps by which India was to frame the new constitution "immediately after the cessation of hostilities." Phrases like "the ultimate goal," "the natural issue" and, even, "as soon as possible after the war" and "the earliest practicable moment", used earlier and rightly regarded in India as patent snags, were now dropped. The very tone and approach were different and unfamiliar. The proposals failed because some of the main features were divorced from realities.

## V THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

THE idea of a Constituent Assembly elected by the whole adult population of the country had been first put forward by the Congress as the fairest means of solving our complicated political and communal problems. To Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru must go a large part of the credit for educating the public as to its real value and inducing Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress to accept it as one of their basic demands. The Faizpur resolution of the Congress which demanded the establishment of a genuinely democratic State in India wanted the new constitution to be framed by a Constituent Assembly elected by adult suffrage. The insistence on adult suffrage was not merely to make the Assembly a fully democratic body but to enable the relative strength of the communities in the population to be reflected in the constitution-making body. The Muslim League, under the presidentship of Mr. Jinnah, however, refused to accept the suggestion, arguing that the Muslims would find themselves in a minority in the Assembly and the majority would be in a position to vote down the minorities on all matters. To this objection, the Congress reply was that the Assembly would decide controversial questions not by majority votes but by trying to secure agreement, that on the question of safeguards for minorities, the views of these minorities would be the deciding factor and that in case of absence of agreement, the issue or issues could be referred to the arbitration of an agreed, impartial tribunal. The Ramgarh resolution of the Congress said that a permanent solution of the communal problem was possible only "through a Constituent Assembly, where the rights of all recognized minorities would be fully protected by agreement, as far as possible, between the elected representatives of various majority and minority groups, or by arbitration if agreement was not reached on any point." But the League, under Mr. Jinnah's auspices, assumed an attitude of unreason, beyond the reach of logic or argument. Its attitude was one of uncompromising opposition to the convening of a Constituent Assembly, and, ultimately, it put forward the idea of partitioning the country on communal lines.

The Draft Declaration accepted the idea of the Constituent Assembly being an elected, as opposed to nominated, body, but the basis was to be the Provincial electorate under the

Act of 1935, and not adult suffrage. That Act had enfranchised roughly about 35 millions or one-tenth of the population, and the first Provincial elections had shown that even this restricted franchise reflected the actual state of opinion in the country in the Provincial Legislatures. Consequently, while the limitation of franchise was regretted, there was not much criticism of the choice of the Provincial electorate for the purpose. The Communal Award had safeguarded the interests of the minorities in the 1935 Constitution by fixing on a basis of weightage the number of seats they should have in the Legislatures, and, consequently, the minorities were assured of representation in the Constituent Assembly, more or less in the same proportion.

Indian opinion, however, would not reconcile itself to the provision in the Declaration as to the manner in which the representatives of the States were to be selected. They were not to be elected but nominated, presumably by the Rulers of States. Unlike the provinces, the States were not obliged to send their representatives to the Constituent Assembly. But it was probable that most States would send their representatives, firstly, in order that they might not be denied their share in the drafting of the future constitution of India and, secondly, because they would be free to exercise their option of acceding or not acceding to the Union after the new constitution had taken shape. If most of the States did send their representatives, there would be a solid reactionary bloc of about 25 per cent. in the Constituent Assembly which would consist of the nominees of the Rulers of States, detracting from the merit of the Assembly as an essentially democratic body. The arrangement, moreover, practically deprived the States subjects, who form 25 per cent. of the population of India, from any share in drafting the future constitution of the country. At least the more progressive States, it was hoped, would utilize whatever representative institutions they possessed in choosing their nominees to the constitution-making body, but this was too flimsy a foundation on which to build any hope. Sir Stafford's argument that they had to accept the position as they found it and the British Government could not exercise over the States the same control as they exercised over British India left the Indian public unconvinced, as the British Government, in their role as the Paramount Power, had never hesitated to take even extreme measures in dealing with the Rulers of States whenever they thought it necessary to do so in Imperial interests. The refusal even to recommend to the Rulers to follow a procedure similar to the one adopted in the Provinces was, indeed, a grave defect and was looked upon as such not merely by the States Subjects Conference but by the Congress also. The subjects of the States who were denied representation at the Round Table Conferences of more than a decade ago were again to be denied representation in the Constituent Assembly to come. The weakness could not be condoned by the Congress, while

the States Subjects Conference decided to have nothing to do with a scheme which dealt with their position in such cavalier fashion.

## VI. NON-ACCESSION.

EASILY the most controversial feature of the post-war part of the scheme, however, was the right given to the Provinces not to accede to the Union, and even to form an alternative Union or Unions. Sir Stafford Cripps had stated that the Provinces, unlike the Indian States, were not to have the option of entering or refusing to send representatives to the constitution-making body. All Provinces must send their representatives to this body, and it was only after the new constitution was drawn up that they were to be free to exercise their right to accede or not to accede. He had further explained that there should be a 60 per cent. majority for accession in the Provincial Legislature, failing which, the dissentients would have the right to demand a plebiscite of the adult male population. The proposal was, evidently, a reply to the demand for partition put forward by the Muslim League. Sir Stafford had argued that in the Constituent Assembly the majority would get a splendid opportunity to convince the minority of the baselessness of its fears and induce it to give up its separatist ambitions. Secondly, the alignment of communities, it was argued, was such as to reduce the chances of any province exercising the right to *nil*. And lastly, if all efforts to convert the minority failed, nobody in the world could stop it from having its own way, stated Sir Stafford Cripps.

The Congress saw in the proposal a blow at one of its most cherished ideals. Freedom and Unity had been its watchwords for a long time and progressive opinion in the country was unwilling to contemplate the possibility of disruption because of the insistence of the League on separation. The suggestion, consequently, came as a profound shock to nationalist opinion, and the suspicion became widespread that the British Government were once again at their old game of encouraging fissiparous tendencies. The demand was scarcely two years old and the British Government were not unaware of the history behind it. The Muslim League had made it a grievance that the Congress refused to give it a share of power in its own right when it accepted office in the Provinces after the introduction of Provincial Autonomy. Building on this, it worked up an atrocity campaign against the Congress which convinced no one outside its own communalist following. Under the Act of 1935, the protection of the interests of minorities was a "special responsibility" of the Provincial Governors, and where these interests were disregarded, the Act specially authorized them to disregard the advice of their Ministers. Still, during two years and more that the Congress remained in office in several Provinces, there was not one single instance of a Governor disregarding the advice of his Ministry in matters relating to the interests of minorities. This did not prevent Mr. Jinnah from making these alleged atrocities the basis of his two-

nation theory and inducing the Muslim League to pass the Pakistan resolution at its Lahore session in March, 1940. The resolution demanded "the establishment of completely independent States formed by demarcating geographically contiguous units into regions which shall be so constituted, with such territorial adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India, shall be grouped together to constitute independent States as Muslim free National Homelands in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."

It was in this situation that Sir Stafford Cripps came out with his blessings for the scheme of partition, by the indirect method of giving the provinces the right not to accede to the Indian Union. The unity which they had brought to India, albeit under alien domination, had been widely advertised by British statesmen as one of their proudest achievements in India, but why they were in such indecent haste to repudiate two centuries of British administration because Mr. Jinnah was denying a thousand years of history they did not explain. The danger of encouraging separatist tendencies in a country like India must have been obvious to the British Government after their experiences in Ireland and Palestine, but the readiness with which they gave recognition to a new-fangled idea threw doubts on the sincerity of their desire to concede to India what was hers. Even at the time of the Round Table conferences of more than a decade ago, Indian statesmen had expressed anxiety about the possibility of the Provinces exercising their newly-won autonomy to refuse to enter the Federation, but they were assured that provincial autonomy and Federation were parts of the same scheme and there was no idea of making the Provinces autonomous, leaving Federation to follow as a remote contingency in the future.

When Sir Samuel Hoare was examined by the Joint Parliamentary Committee to which the White Paper constitution had been referred, the question was put to him specifically by the late Sir Prabhashankar Pattani on July 21, 1933. Here are his questions and Sir Samuel Hoare's answers:

*Sir P. Pattani:* Then one other point I should like to know is this: There is a fear in which I do not share, that if Autonomy precedes Central responsibility, it may happen that the Autonomous Provinces may refuse to come into the Federation when their opinion is asked after several years.

*Sir Samuel Hoare:* I really do not know what Sir Prabhashankar means by that. The Provinces will not be asked whether they are coming in or not. The Provinces will have to come into the Federation under the Constitution Act.

*Sir P. Pattani:* It is from that point of view that I was going to suggest that I hope it may be possible to set down in

the scheme that no provinces will have the option of refusing to come in as soon as the conditions for Federation are established.

*Sir Samuel Hoare:* We have never at any period of any Round Table Conference, as far as I can recollect, or in any Committee, ever contemplated such an option.

No more specific assurance could have been given by an authoritative spokesman of Government. In less than ten years, however, Sir Stafford Cripps, the Socialist, was prepared to concede what Sir Samuel Hoare, the diehard, refused even to contemplate.

Pakistan is the dead end of the alley into which the Muslims in India were induced to enter at the time the British Government agreed to accept the undemocratic device of separate electorates. When responsible government became the goal of British constitutional policy in India, separate electorates had become outmoded, as thereby the minority was dooming itself to the position of a perpetual minority, with no hope of ever becoming the majority. But the Muslims were slow to make the discovery. The demand for weightage in no way improved their position and it was only after the Provinces became autonomous that the Muslims in minority Provinces discovered their helplessness. There was no constitutional means by which they could get a share in power and they were unwilling to accept the suggestion to become signatories to the Congress programme and policy, though that policy had nothing communal in it. In this plight, Pakistan appeared to them to offer a way out, without having to undergo the humiliating experience of retracing their steps. The practical difficulties in the way were ignored completely and the League became committed to an objective which thinking Muslims consider to be against the best interests of the Mussalmans themselves.

The Congress attitude towards the minorities has been the subject of much malicious propaganda. Short of dismemberment of the country or perpetuating its subject status, the Congress had been willing to give the Muslims and other minorities all the safeguards they desired in the new constitution. It was not blind to the antagonisms between the communities which had their background in history, but its hope was the evolution of a common composite nationality and the wearing down of ancient prejudices by the slow progress of education. Recent League policy it looked upon as a turning back of the hands of the clock and since Hindus and Muslims must in any case live together in the Indian sub-continent, whether under one Government or several Governments, wisdom pointed the way towards solutions which tended to minimize differences and maximize goodwill and friendliness rather than perpetuate these antagonisms. The Congress position is a fundamentally sound one and fair to all parties—a fact which in their blind hatred of Mahatma Gandhi and everything he is associated with, the British

do not care to acknowledge. Rather it suits them to parade Mr. Jinnah's obstructiveness in the world as proof of "disagreement" among Indian communities.

## VII. INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

PARAGRAPH (e) of the Draft Declaration dealt with the interim arrangements to be made immediately. The British Government could not have been under any misapprehension as to the importance which Indian opinion attached to this. The August Declaration and the subsequent expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council, to include a few more Indians, had failed to create any enthusiasm in the country. Japan's entry into the war and her sensational initial successes had also tended to emphasize the importance of the present and the uncertainties of the future. The language of the clause in the Draft Declaration dealing with what ought to be done at present was nebulous. Speaking in the House of Commons, on April 28, 1942, on his return from India, Sir Stafford Cripps said that this part of the Declaration was in "vague and general terms" as it was desired to leave the question open for discussion. But leaving the question open for discussion did not imply absence of any definite view on the part of His Majesty's Government, as there was a specific reservation about Defence. What then were the real intentions of His Majesty's Government in this respect? How much power were they prepared to transfer to the new Government which Indian leaders were being called upon to join? While giving Sir Stafford Cripps a large amount of discretion, they must have laid down the broad lines of the limitations beyond which he was not to go. Were there any such instructions, and, if so, what were they? In the absence of authoritative information on the point, we can only make a guess from Sir Stafford's own statements while he was in India and the pronouncements of Mr. Amery in Parliament and elsewhere.

The draft definitely reserved Defence as the responsibility of His Majesty's Government until the new constitution could be framed but it assigned to the Government of India "the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India." This was the main issue over which there were prolonged negotiations between Sir Stafford and the Congress and though at one time a settlement appeared to be in sight, ultimately the parties found it impossible to agree. The difficulties involved and the suggestions made to get over them deserve more extended treatment in a separate chapter. On the larger issue of the participation of Indian leaders in the government of their country, the Draft Declaration merely stated: "His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations." The Prime Minister had some time previously invited two Government



of India representatives to the War Cabinet and the Pacific War Council and thus the participation of Indians in the counsels of the Commonwealth and the United Nations might be said to have been assured even before Sir Stafford Cripps came out on his mission. As for "participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country," by the Declaration of August, 1940, the Viceroy's Executive Council had already been expanded to include a large number of Indians, though none of the organized parties in the country approved of the declaration or agreed to join the Council. By its Poona resolution the Congress had asked for a declaration of independence and the establishment of a provisional National Government at the Centre "which, though formed as a transitory measure, should be such as to command the confidence of all the elected elements in the Central Legislature." Consequently, when the Cripps Declaration was made, it was assumed that the co-operation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people was being sought in the formation of a real National Government at the Centre. There could not be effective participation, unless there was transfer of real power to those whose co-operation was sought. The reservation of the control of Defence seemed to confirm the assumption that what was being offered was a National Government and not another expansion. Sir Stafford Cripps' elucidation of his scheme at the Press conference of March 29 and in his conversations with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and other Congress leaders also appeared to justify the assumption. Since the negotiations broke down and the whole subsequent controversy has ranged over the issues of Defence and the powers of the National Government, it will be worth while to consider them in detail.

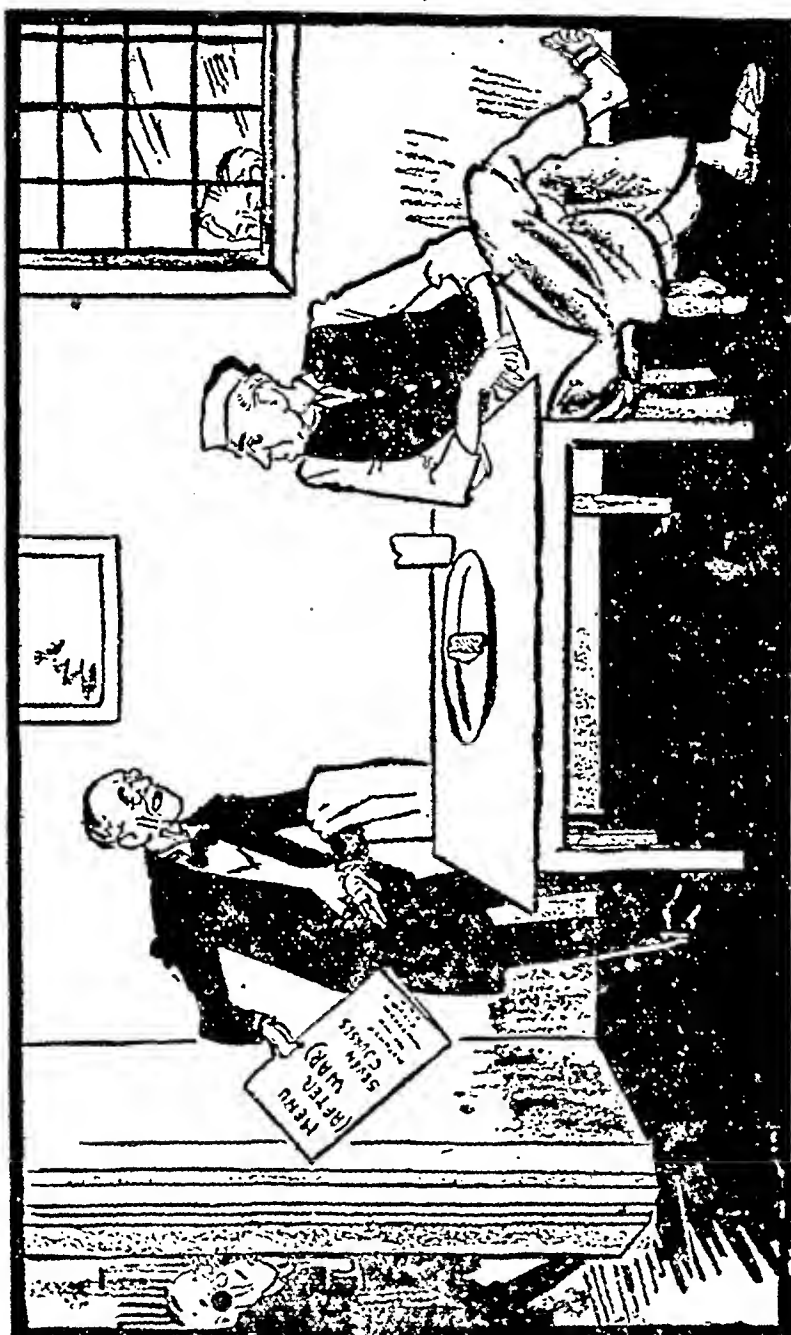
### VIII DEFENCE

THE categoric terms in which the Declaration sought to retain for His Majesty's Government control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war-effort were bound to draw pointed attention and this was the issue which occupied most of the time and attention of Sir Stafford Cripps and the Indian leaders during the major part of the former's stay in this country. Even the task assigned to the Government of India "of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India" appeared to be an amendment made after Sir Stafford's arrival in India as a sop to those insisting on joint control of defence. At the Press conference of March 29, Sir Stafford explained that the British Government would be false to their duties if they did not retain control, as this was necessary for the effective defence of India. There might be an Indian Defence Member but he would not be able to direct or control defence. In his broadcast speech the next day, Sir Stafford, however, declared that the Commander-in-Chief would continue to be a member of the Executive Council, in order to give the Government of India an effective share in defence! It

was a fallacy to talk of internal defence, he said in reply to a question whether he would agree to transfer internal defence to an Indian, as it was impossible to dissociate internal from external defence, especially in time of war. As regards joint responsibility, he said that there could be joint responsibility only to the extent mentioned in the Declaration. "It would be dishonest to say," he added, "that an Indian Defence Member would be responsible for the defence of India." So long as the effective army, air force and navy had to be brought from Britain and the Dominions, he maintained, the movements of all these forces must be under some centralized control and this could only be the Commander-in-Chief acting under the orders of the War Cabinet. He parried a question about the position in Australia by the retort: "The position in Australia today is that the whole thing is under American control."

The explanations did nothing to lessen the disappointment which the reservation created. The Congress claimed an effective voice in the Central Government to popular representatives in order to tell the people that the government of their country was in their own hands and they should rally to the defence of the country which was threatened by Japanese aggression. The leaders could not rouse the enthusiasm of their countrymen merely by appealing to them to give men, money and materials to the Government to carry on their war-effort, though Defence was not under their control but under the control of the British Government. With popular control at the Centre, the Congress claimed, the present war-effort could be increased a great deal and the people would willingly come forward to make greater sacrifices. Many in high places doubted this claim, but the Congress was not alone in holding this view. Writing on the debate in the House of Commons on the India and Burma (Temporary and Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill on October 8, the *London Times* said that "India's co-operation in the war, already abundantly proved in bravery and loyalty in many fields, could beyond doubt be multiplied ten-fold if the constitutional issue was removed from its path." Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru explained the Congress view in words which could hardly be bettered. At a Press conference on April 12, he stated:

"Their conception of defence was different from that of the Government. It was not keeping a regiment here and there, but they wanted to mobilize hundreds of millions of Indians. They wanted to make every man and woman do something for the war—make it a popular war. The military conception was to fight with their armies and, if the latter failed, to surrender, but their conception was different. They would not surrender whatever happened—whatever happened to military forces, popular resistance should continue to the end—as in China and Russia. Could they discharge their duty in this spirit? Could they make India hum as an organized unit of resistance? Could they make India feel that she was fighting her own war for her



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freedom? That was their idea in asking for a popular conception of Defence, but the Government's attitude as put to them was a singularly complacent attitude—a conception of India from a standpoint which was peculiar only to England. 'We are in the right. All those who are against us, are not only in the wrong, but damnably in the wrong.'"

The leaders agreed to leave the actual conduct of military operations to the Commander-in-Chief, but why could not political control of defence be exercised by a responsible Indian? The argument that the separation of political and military controls would result in the British army in India being controlled by the British Government and the Indian army by the Government of India did not impress any one. Similar problems had been tackled successfully elsewhere. British and even American troops had gone to the Dominions and it was possible for them to conduct their operations in these Dominions without infringing the right of the Dominions to control their defence. British forces had gone even to countries like France and Russia and functioned there effectively without different political controls producing anything in the nature of friction. Above all, it was felt that since in war time defence practically impinged on all the administrative activities of the Government, and military considerations were the overriding factor even in civil administration, reservation of defence amounted to reducing popular control even in other departments to a shadow.

This was a thoroughly unsatisfactory position. The Congress Working Committee's resolution rejecting the Draft Declaration which was handed over to Sir Stafford Cripps on April 2 pointed out: "At any time Defence is a vital subject; during war time it is all-important and covers almost every sphere of life and administration. To take away Defence from the sphere of responsibility at this stage is to reduce that responsibility to a farce and a nullity and to make it perfectly clear that India is not going to be free in any way and her Government is not going to function as a free and independent Government during the pendency of the war." Immediately on receipt of the resolution, Sir Stafford Cripps got into touch with His Majesty's Government. Meanwhile, through his good offices, both the Congress President and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had seen and discussed with the Commander-in-Chief, what Sir Stafford Cripps called, "the technical difficulties of the situation." On April 7, Sir Stafford communicated to the Congress President the result of his reference to London. In his letter Sir Stafford referred to the anxiety of His Majesty's Government "to give representative Indians the maximum possible participation in the Government," and added that His Majesty's Government appreciated the force of arguments "as to the necessity of an effective appeal to the Indian people for their own defence." He then made the following proposal on behalf of His Majesty's Government in order to get over the difficulty:

(a) The Commander-in-Chief should retain a seat in the Viceroy's Executive Council as "War Member" and should retain his full control over all the war activities of the armed forces in India subject to the control of His Majesty's Government and the War Cabinet upon which body a representative Indian should sit with equal powers in all matters relating to the Defence of India. Membership of the Pacific Council would, likewise, be offered to a representative Indian.

(b) An Indian representative member would be added to the Viceroy's Executive, who would take over those sections of the Department of Defence which can organizationally be separated immediately from the Commander-in-Chief's War Department and which are specified under head (i) of the annexure. In addition this member would take over the Defence Co-ordination Department which is at present directly under the Viceroy, and certain other important functions of the Government of India which are directly related to Defence and which do not fall under any of the other existing departments and which are specified under head (ii) of the annexure.

#### ANNEXURE

(i) Matters now dealt with in the Defence Department which would be transferred to a Defence Co-ordination Department. (a) Public relations. (b) Demobilization and post-War reconstruction. (c) Petroleum Officer, whose functions are to calculate the requirements of, and make provision for, all the petroleum products required for the Army, Navy and Air Force, and for the Civil Departments, including Storage and Distribution. (d) Indian representation on the Eastern Group Supply Council. (e) Amenities for, and welfare of, troops and their dependants, including Indian soldiers abroad. (f) All canteen organizations. (g) Certain non-technical educational institutions, e.g., Lawrence Schools, K.G.R.I.M. Schools and the Prince of Wales' Royal Indian Military College. (h) Stationery, Printing and forms for the Army. (i) Reception, accommodation and social arrangements for all foreign missions, representatives and officers.

(ii) In addition the Defence Co-ordination Department would take over many major questions bearing directly on defence, but difficult to locate in any particular existing department. Examples are: "Denial" policy; Policy of evacuation from threatened areas; Signals co-ordination; Economic warfare.

One had only to look at the list of subjects proposed to be transferred to the Indian Defence Member to realize that he would not be anything like what the Congress had been insisting a Defence Member should be but a sort of odds-and-ends man for the army,

relieving the real Defence Member, the Commander-in-Chief, of non-essential responsibilities. The position of an Indian Defence Member who would be in charge of army canteens and non-technical schools was referred to in terms of withering sarcasm by Pandit Jawaharlal at a Press conference.

It was at this stage in the negotiations that Colonel Louis Johnson, President Roosevelt's Personal Representative in India, came into the picture. After seeing the Congress leaders and Sir Stafford Cripps, he tried his best to avert a complete breakdown by suggesting another compromise formula. Sir Stafford Cripps took great pains to explain in Parliament that Colonel Johnson had acted in a purely personal capacity to render such assistance as he could and at no time was there any question of American intervention. Both at Karachi on his way back and in Parliament he sought to create the impression that Colonel Johnson was first approached by Congress leaders for help, but both Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress President have denied the allegation. It was an allegation which Sir Stafford should not have made or at least have withdrawn after the emphatic denial of the Congress. In any case, all are agreed as to the helpful part Colonel Johnson played when the negotiations had reached a critical stage and all are thankful to him for the assistance he rendered. Sir Stafford also appears to be over-sensitive in denying American intervention. When the Prime Minister of Great Britain is not ashamed to make repeated voyages to meet the American President and the presence of American forces in India is not considered derogatory to British Imperial prestige, there is no reason why any British statesman should pretend to resent the possibility of American intervention in the Indian dispute. Incidentally, though Colonel Johnson referred at a Press conference to the possibility of a "Johnson version" of the negotiations coming out, no such version has so far been published. That version would have thrown considerable light on points which are still obscure, but we can only surmise why the Johnson version has not seen the light of day and at whose instance the publication of the version has been successfully stopped so far.

At his instance—and presumably with Sir Stafford's approval—a new formula was placed before the Congress Working Committee. No list of subjects or functions was, however, attached to it. This was as follows.

#### THE JOHNSON FORMULA

In amplification of clause (e) of the Draft Declaration, His Majesty's Government make the following proposition upon the subject-matter of the Defence of India.

(a) The Defence Department shall be placed in charge of a representative Indian member with the exception of functions to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief as War Member of the Executive Council.

(b) A War Department will be constituted which will take over such functions of the Defence Department as are not retained by the Defence Member. A list of all the retained functions has been agreed, to which will be added further important responsibilities including the matters now dealt with by the Defence Co-ordination Department and other vital matters related to the defence of India.

The Working Committee considered the approach made in this draft a more healthy one and felt that, with some alterations, it could be made the basis of further discussions. It then drafted the following revised formula:-

#### WORKING COMMITTEE FORMULA

(a) The Defence Department shall be placed in the charge of a representative Indian member, but certain functions relating to the conduct of the war will be exercised, for the duration of war, by the Commander-in-Chief, who will be in control of the war activities of the armed forces in India, and who will be an extraordinary member of the National Cabinet for that purpose.

(b) A War Department will be constituted under the Commander-in-Chief. This Department will take over such functions as are to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief. A list of such functions has been prepared and is attached.

(c) The Defence Member shall be in charge of all other matters relating to Defence, including those now dealt with by the Defence Co-ordination Department.

In sending this revised formula to Sir Stafford Cripps, the Working Committee pointed out that it did not differ materially from the Johnson formula. The general approach was the same. The National Government was to be responsible for the entire government of the country, including its defence. But, because of the war, certain functions relating to the conduct of the war were to be delegated to the Commander-in-Chief and were to be exercised by him for the duration. "He will, in effect, have full control of these operations and of the war activities of the armed forces." Between the Defence and the War Departments there would be full co-operation. "The National Government," it went on to state, "will inevitably strain every nerve towards the successful defence of the country and will give all possible help to the Commander-in-Chief."

The difference between the earlier approach to the problem by His Majesty's Government and the new formula was an important one. Instead of reserving Defence as the responsibility of His Majesty's Government and asking the Indian Defence Member to collect the leavings from the Commander-in-Chief's table, the Working Committee's proposal was to consider the National Government responsible for the whole field of administration, including Defence,

but to reserve to the Commander-in-Chief, for the duration of the war, certain functions essential for the discharge of his responsibilities and the carrying out of military operations. The Congress, in other words, was willing to admit the practical limitation imposed on the powers of the National Government by the war situation and the special position of the Commander-in-Chief, provided there was willingness to recognize its authority over all Departments of Government, including Defence. But everything, naturally, would depend on what functions would be reserved for the Commander-in-Chief and what would be discharged by the Defence Member.

In reply to this communication from the Working Committee Sir Stafford Cripps sent an amended formula of his own. This formula was in the following terms:—

#### CRIPPS FORMULA

(a) The Defence Department shall be placed in the charge of a representative Indian member, but certain functions relating to the conduct of the war will be exercised, until the new constitution comes into operation, by the Commander-in-Chief, who will be in control of the war activities of the armed forces in India, and who will be a member of the Executive Council for that purpose.

(b) A War Department will be constituted under the Commander-in-Chief. This Department will take over such functions as are to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief. A list of such functions has been prepared and is attached.

(c) The Defence Member shall be in charge of all other matters relating to Defence in the Defence Department and those now dealt with by the Defence Co-ordination Department in addition to other important matters closely related to Defence.

(d) In the event of any new functions falling to be discharged in relation to Defence or any dispute arising as to the allocation of any old functions, it shall be decided by His Majesty's Government.

#### *Functions of the War Minister:*

The War Department, for which the Commander-in-Chief will be Member, will be responsible for the governmental relations of G.H.Q., N.H.Q. and A.H.Q., which include:—

(1) Examining and sanctioning all proposals emanating from G.H.Q. and A.H.Q.

(2) Representing the policy of Government on all questions connected with the war which originate in or concern G.H.Q., N.H.Q. or A.H.Q.

(3) Acting as the channel of communication between the Government of India and H.M.G. on all such questions.



(4) Acting as liaison between these headquarters and the other Departments of Government and Provincial Governments.

The Cripps formula was considered by the Working Committee on April 8. The description of the War Minister's functions appeared to be so all-comprehensive that it was decided to ask for illustrative lists of the functions of the War Member and the Defence Member. As no such lists were forthcoming, the Congress President and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru saw Sir Stafford Cripps on April 9. What transpired at the fateful interview so far as the Defence question was concerned is described by the Congress President in his letter of April 10 to Sir Stafford Cripps:

"When we asked you for illustrative lists of subjects for the two departments, you referred us to the old list for the Defence Department which you had previously sent us and which we had been unable to accept. You added that certain residuary subjects might be added to this, but, in effect, there was not likely to be any such as the allocation was complete. Thus, you said that substantially there was no change between the old list and any new one that might be prepared. If this was so, and we were to go back ultimately to the place we started from, then what was the purpose of our searching for a new formula? A new set of words meaning the same thing made no difference."

This attitude could have only one meaning. Meanwhile, the discussions during the interview had revealed more fundamental differences as regards the powers of the National Government, in the face of which the whole controversy over Defence appeared to be both meaningless and futile. On the morning of April 10, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru gave an account of what transpired at the interview to the Working Committee, which decided finally to reject the proposals. The curtain had been rung down, and the last act was over.

Though the actual break did not occur over it, Defence was the issue which led up to it. And since the attitude taken up by both parties on this issue will decide the final apportionment of responsibility for the ultimate breakdown, it might clear the ground to appreciate how far the Congress was prepared to go in its anxiety to secure a settlement, what it insisted upon and what the British Government were not prepared to concede. In the exchange of correspondence between Sir Stafford Cripps and the Congress President, there is ample material to enable us to understand and appreciate the different points of view.

If the Congress asked for popular control over Defence, it was because, firstly, there could be no real transfer of power without control of Defence, and, secondly, without such control it was impossible to kindle the enthusiasm of the people for the defence of their country. Thus on general grounds, the Congress would be

entitled to ask for complete control over Defence, with the exception of the British armed forces forming part of the Army in India. But because of its anxiety to reach a settlement in view of the Japanese threat to the integrity of the country, the Congress was prepared to agree to considerable limitations. In his letter of April 10, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad stated:

"We made it clear that the Commander-in-Chief in India would have control of the armed forces and the conduct of operations and other matters connected therewith. With a view to arriving at a settlement, we were prepared to accept certain limitations on the normal powers of the Defence Minister. We had no desire to upset in the middle of the war the present military organization or arrangements. We accepted also that the higher strategy of the war should be controlled by the War Cabinet in London which would have an Indian member. The immediate object before us was to make the defence of India more effective, to strengthen it, to broad-base it on the popular will, and to reduce all red tape, delay and inefficiency from it. There was no question of our interfering with the technical and operational sides. One thing, of course, was of paramount importance to us; India's safety and defence. Subject to this primary consideration, there was no reason why there should be any difficulty in finding a way out of the present impasse in accordance with the unanimous desire of the Indian people, for in this matter there are no differences amongst us."

A great deal was sought to be made during the negotiations about India being represented on an equal footing on the War Cabinet which dictates the higher strategy of the war. But its real significance can only be seen when taken in conjunction with the refusal to give real power to the Indian Defence Member. In London, where the Indian representatives would be in a small minority, it was safe to give them equality of status in a body which finally decided all questions of higher strategy relating to the war. The Indian representatives would practically be impotent, except where they happened to agree with their British colleagues. But in India to hand over control of Defence to an Indian would be to transfer real power, and this the British Government were not prepared to do. The presence of Indians in the War Cabinet and the Pacific Council may help in deceiving the world about the equality of status conceded to India. A dummy Indian Defence Member would also serve a similar purpose but not one who controlled Defence policy, to however limited an extent.

If the Congress suggestion had been accepted, the position would have been somewhat as follows: The Commander-in-Chief would be responsible for the conduct of all military operations while the Indian Defence Member would be responsible for all Governmental relations between the army and the Government. While the disposition



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of the forces and similar questions would be decided solely by the Commander-in-Chief, it would be for the Indian Defence Member to say, for example, how the funds needed to finance military operations were to be raised. The Commander-in-Chief could certainly express his opinion about the fighting qualities of different classes in the army, but the question of recruitment and abolition of distinctions like martial and non-martial races would be for the Defence Member to decide. The distinction between the political and military aspects of Defence is one well understood in democratic countries and the position of the Indian Defence Member would be something like that of the Secretary of State for War in the British Cabinet. Apart from the theoretical limitations to his power to which the Congress was prepared to agree, practical considerations would still further limit his powers. He would have no control over the British section of the army while, even in the Indian army, the safeguarding of the interests of the large number of British officers would limit his control over it. Much was made of the difficulty of disentangling from the complicated organization of the army in India and General Headquarters during the war the functions of the Defence Member and the Commander-in-Chief, both of which were being discharged by the latter. But if the assumption was one of hearty co-operation between the Defence Member and the Commander-in-Chief, all such questions could have been easily solved, especially if the parties bore in mind the exigencies of war.

The supreme issue, however, was, how in face of the imminent threat of Japanese invasion, an appeal could be made to the imagination of the people in order to harness their enthusiasm to the defence of the country. In the declarations of war with Germany, Italy and Japan, the people of India had no voice. With war drawing closer to our borders, the need for converting a Government war into a people's war was apparent to all. The British Government too were not inappreciative of the need, as the dispatch of the Cripps mission showed. The Congress point of view was that not only should there be recognition of the ultimate freedom of the country after the war, but the immediate steps taken should be such as to demonstrate to the people that a great change had taken place. If Defence was a reserved subject, it could not be said by Indian leaders that the war was their war, fought for the defence of their freedom and the integrity of their soil. With control of Defence in their hands, ultimate power would continue to rest in the hands of the British Government, and the Congress felt that it could not shoulder the responsibility of rousing the patriotism and spirit of sacrifice of the people for what would be not the Indian people's war but the British Government's war against Japan.

Why then did Sir Stafford Cripps refuse to budge from his position? In his letter dated April 11 to the Congress President, Sir Stafford Cripps said that unity of command was essential in the interests of Allied help to India. The Congress leaders had never suggested that

there should not be unity of command. In fact their frank recognition of the position of the Commander-in-Chief as head of the Indian armed forces, even though he would continue to be appointed by the British Government, was itself a recognition of the principle of unity of command. But unity of command need not necessarily mean surrender of political control by the Governments of different countries whose forces would be operating under one active command. By allowing the British Expeditionary Force in France to act under the supreme commandership of General Gamelin, the British Government did not hand over political control of these forces to the French Government. In Australia, General MacArthur has been Supreme Commander of the forces of the United Nations, but the Australian Government have not ceased to exercise political control over the Australian army, navy and air force. There are American forces in Britain today over which the U. S. Government have not abandoned control. The plea that there could be no transfer of responsibility for Defence because of the need for unity of command was a spurious one.

Another argument advanced by Sir Stafford Cripps in justification of the refusal to accede to the Congress position was that their "duty to our American allies" made such a course impossible. It was bad enough for the British Government to refuse to transfer responsibility because of their paramount duty to defend India, but it was worse to drag in America, to make her assume a portion of the blame for their own reactionary attitude. Why should the need for American help, or even the presence of American forces in India, stand in the way of the representatives of the Indian people assuming responsibility for the defence of their country? Except for Sir Stafford's own *ipse dixit*, there is nothing to show that the Government of the United States had objected, or would object, to such transfer. American forces have been sent to many countries, but there has been no known instance of the Americans objecting to the control of defence of these countries being vested in the representatives of the people of these countries. In the absence of any definite confirmation from American official sources, the allegation that the United States had objected or was likely to object to Defence becoming the responsibility of an Indian Defence Member must be attributed to British anxiety to prop up an untenable position. An authoritative American statement would have immediately put a stop to this line of argument, but so far, unfortunately, such a public denial has not been forthcoming.

The unhappy feeling which the attitude of Sir Stafford Cripps left behind in India was that none of these reasons was the real one. But what, exactly, was the reason for this attitude at a time of grave and even imminent peril to both countries? In answering the question, we may have to enter the region of motives where we will have nothing to guide us but surmises and suspicion. But a consideration of past British policy in India, in matters of defence, must

prove enlightening. For a long time British policy had been to keep a small professional army in India in which there would be a definite proportion of British troops. The recruitment of even this small professional army was confined to certain sections, artificially classified as martial. There was nothing in the nature of a citizen army and no attempt made to induce the people as a whole to develop an interest in the defence of their country. The Indian demand for the training and recruitment of a larger number of Indian officers to the army was steadily resisted, with the result that, with the outbreak of war and the expansion of the Indian army, the Indian army was faced with a heavy shortage of officers which had to be made good somehow. Constitutionally, the defence budget was not subject to the vote of the Legislature, even though that vote could not be final under the present constitution. Under the Act of 1935 also, Defence was to be treated as a completely reserved subject under British control, even though the Defence Sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference, over which Mr. J. H. Thomas presided, had recommended that "the defence of India must, to an increasing extent, be the concern of the Indian people, and not of the British Government alone." If effect had been given to this recommendation in the intervening decade, possibly the crisis which arose in the relations between Great Britain and India during the present war would have been avoided. In the face of this history, the attitude of the British Government did not come as a surprise to public opinion in India.

#### IX. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

**T**HOUGH Defence was the issue over which there were prolonged negotiations, the actual break occurred not over the question of Defence but over the wider question of the powers and functions of the National Government. The Draft Declaration, as has already been pointed out, had referred only in the vaguest terms to the arrangements to be made for the duration of the war. Apart from the reservation over Defence, the Declaration merely stated: "His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations." Sir Stafford had told the Congress President when this vagueness was pointed out that "this was deliberate, so as to give him freedom to determine these changes in consultation with others." Consequently, it was assumed—wrongly as the event was to show—that His Majesty's Government were willing to transfer real power to the representatives of Indian people. Before we come to deal with this question in detail, however, it may be useful to understand the present constitutional position of the Government of India, which the late Lord Curzon described during the debate in the House of Lords on Mr. Montagu's resignation "as a subordinate branch of the British Government."

That description held good, in spite of the changes in the

composition of the Viceroy's Executive Council, at the time of Sir Stafford Cripps's visit, and holds good even today. Before the war and until the Declaration of August, 1940, the Viceroy's Executive Council consisted of the Commander-in-Chief, three European members and three Indian members of whom one was usually a Muslim. The three European members as a rule held the important portfolios of Finance, Home and Railways. The Railways and even Finance had been held by Indians for short periods, one Indian having acted as Finance Member, but the Home Department was never held by an Indian and no Indian had ever held permanent office as Finance Member. So far as Defence was concerned, there was no question of an Indian being in charge, as the Commander-in-Chief combined in himself the functions of the Defence Member and the Commander-in-Chief and he was always the nominee of the British Government. When the decision to expand the Council was made, the total membership of the Council excluding the Commander-in-Chief was raised from 6 to 11. Of the 11 members there were still three Europeans and there was no change in the portfolios held by them. Communications, Home and Finance still continued to be the close preserve of Europeans, but the other Departments were split up and one or two new ones created in order to find portfolios for the eight Indian members, of whom four were Hindus, three Muslims, and one a Parsi. As there were 8 Indian members in a Council of 12, it could be—and was—claimed that, for the first time, Indians were in a majority in the Viceroy's Executive Council, but the fact that all important Departments were under the control of Europeans was sought to be slurred over by magnifying the significance of the Departments of Supply and Civil Defence being under the control of Indians.

This was the composition of the Council. As for its powers, they were the same as when they were defined in the Government of India Act of 1919. The provisions of this Act, with such modifications as were necessitated by the passing of the Government of India Act of 1935, had been incorporated as the Ninth Schedule to this Act and they described the powers of the Executive Council in the same words as were used by the Act of 1919. The members are appointed by the King under the Royal Sign Manual. Their numbers are to be such as His Majesty thinks fit to appoint. Three of them must have been under the service of the Crown in India for ten years and one a barrister or pleader of a High Court of not less than ten years' standing. There is no provision insisting on the Commander-in-Chief being a member of the Council, but, if he is a member, he is to have rank and precedence next to the Governor-General. "At any meeting of the Council, the Governor-General or other person presiding and one member of the Council (other than the Commander-in-Chief) may exercise all the functions of the Governor-General-in-Council." The intention is probably to lay down the quorum—though a quorum of one is a remarkable one for a council constituting the Government of a country—but in practice, the Viceroy has made and enforced

decisions, with the support of the one Member concerned, leaving the other Members absolutely ignorant even when these decisions involved major questions of policy. The Governor-General may make rules and orders for the more convenient transaction of the business of the Council and all acts done under such rules are to be treated as acts of the Governor-General-in-Council. In case of differences of opinion, the Governor-General is bound by the decision of the majority of those present, and, if they are equally divided, the Governor-General or the presiding member will have a casting vote. This is, however, subject to the proviso that where "the safety, tranquillity or interests of British India" are affected, he can overrule the decision of the majority. Any two dissentient members have the right to report the fact of their dissent, and their reasons thereof, to the Secretary of State. Whenever the Governor-General-in-Council declares that it is expedient for the Governor-General to visit any part of India unaccompanied by his Council, the Governor-General may be authorized to exercise all or any of the powers which might be exercised by the Governor-General-in-Council.

What India has may be described as Council Government, in which, however, the Governor-General has such overriding powers, by statute and convention, that for all practical purposes it is one-man rule which prevails. The fact that in the ordinary day-to-day administration the members are allowed a great deal of freedom in deciding routine matters does not make of this Government anything but the autocracy it is, tempered, if at all, by the control exercised by the Secretary of State and Parliament. The words "safety, tranquillity or interests of British India" have, in practice, degenerated into a convenient formula for the Viceroy to veto the decisions of the Legislature and his Executive Council whenever he wants to do so. The members of the Executive Council owe their office to the Viceroy. They are usually drawn from the ranks of public men and administrators only too willing to accommodate themselves to the exigencies of the situation. Even if a body chosen haphazardly can function as a homogeneous Cabinet, its majority decisions can always be overruled by the Viceroy. The Viceroy, with a single member, can discharge the functions of the whole Council. While on tour, he can, if he wants, act on behalf of the Council as a whole, in utter disregard of its existence. The members of the Council are really in the position of Permanent Under-Secretaries of State in the United Kingdom, and it is a distortion of the truth to represent them as a Cabinet of Ministers.

When Sir Stafford Cripps invited Indian political leaders to join this Executive Council, it was assumed that the British Government would be willing to make the necessary minimum changes in the constitution of the Council, if not by statute, at least by convention, in order to enable the Council to function as a responsible Cabinet. The Congress demand for a National Government made at Poona in July 1940 and the history of the previous controversy about Council



expansion should have made this much plain to any one authorized to negotiate with Indian leaders on behalf of the British Government. The emphatic terms in which the Draft Declaration reserved the Defence of India as a responsibility of the British Government tended to confirm the illusion that all other subjects were being transferred to the representatives of the Indian people. If the constitutional position of the members of the Executive Council was to remain as it had always been, if the Viceroy were to continue to enjoy under the new arrangements all the powers he possessed under the Act of 1919, and if the powers of the Secretary of State and the British Parliament to have the last word in Indian affairs were to continue unimpaired, where was the point in arguing about the powers of the new Defence Member? The new Defence Member would be under the thumb of the Viceroy in the same way as the other members of the Executive Council, and the British Government would be in the same position as now to make their control of Defence effective. Even Sir Stafford could not have been under the impression, through all the stages of the negotiations over Defence, that what Congress wanted was the appointment of an Indian as Defence Member, possessing the same powers as the present members of the Executive Council. However that may be, the earnestness with which the controversy over Defence was carried on helped to confirm the view in the minds of Congress leaders that what was being offered to them was a National Government with all the powers which such Governments possess in other countries, the only limitation on its powers being the reservation of the control over Defence to His Majesty's Government.

The manner in which Sir Stafford explained the implications of the offer made by His Majesty's Government at the Press conference on March 29 and to the Congress leaders in their earlier interviews with him left no room for any suspicion of mental reservations on the part of His Majesty's Government. At the Press conference Sir Stafford, referring to this part of the Declaration, stated that the intention was to indicate to the Governor-General, who was responsible for the formation of the Government of India, the broad lines upon which, in accordance with the scheme, that Government might be formed. "All the details of the formation of that Government are for the Governor-General to decide, and we have not attempted and should not attempt to take that responsibility out of his hands." Nothing was obligatory on the Governor-General, but, added Sir Stafford, he could Indianize the Executive Council. The object was to give the fullest measure of government to the Indian people at the present time, consistent with the possibilities of the present constitution which could not be changed till the end of the war. But the section in the Act of 1919 insisting on three Service members of ten years' standing being in the Council might be repealed. "The intention of the document, as far as possible, subject to the reservation of defence," he added, "is to put power in the hands of Indian leaders." The Council, he declared, would have to work within the present constitution,

but he indicated that a good deal could be done by changing the conventions or adopting new ones. He particularly mentioned that the Executive Council could become a Cabinet. At a later conference, he agreed that, if the new arrangements were agreed upon, the present members of the Executive Council would have to resign. That was the normal practice. Official reporters were seen taking down notes of the Press conference of March 29, and Sir Stafford, in reply to a query, stated that an official report of the proceedings of the conference would be made available to the press. In view of subsequent developments, it is significant that no such report was supplied to the press. In none of his speeches delivered subsequent to the breakdown of his talks, did Sir Stafford repudiate any of these statements or so much as refer to them.

In his interviews with Indian leaders at which he handed over to them copies of the Draft Declaration, Sir Stafford is also reported to have made similar statements. Referring to what transpired in the first interview, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President, in his letter dated April 11 to Sir Stafford Cripps, wrote:

"You told me that there would be a National Government which would function as a Cabinet and that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King in England *vis-a-vis* his Cabinet. In regard to the India Office, you told me that you were surprised that no one had so far mentioned this important matter, and that the practical course was to have this attached or incorporated with the Dominions Office."

This statement of the Congress President as to what transpired at his first interview with Sir Stafford Cripps has not so far been contradicted by the latter. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, at a Press conference addressed by him on April 12, 1942, said:

"From the first, the impression which Sir Stafford had given was that the new Government would be a National Government. Sir Stafford had himself often used the words 'National Cabinet.' He had also said that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King, in other words, a constitutional head. The language used by Sir Stafford Cripps had led them to assume that everything was being transferred except Defence and also that the Viceroy would not interfere with the decisions of the Cabinet, though he might have special powers, such as in connection with the States or some major issue."

In his letter of April 7, 1942, to the Congress President, the Lord Privy Seal had himself stated that, although it was impossible to make any changes in the existing constitution during the period of hostilities, "His Majesty's Government were anxious to give representative Indians the maximum possible participation in the Government during that period, in accordance with the principle laid down in Clause (c) of

the Draft Declaration." He also spoke of the Civil Departments being administered "by representative members in the new National Government." And finally, towards the close of his letter, referring to the hope of His Majesty's Government that the scheme would be accepted, he spoke of the Viceroy "embarking forthwith upon the task of forming the new National Government, in consultation with the leaders of the Indian people."

The general impression created was that, though the present constitution would not be changed, the leaders of the different political parties were being asked to join the Viceroy's Executive Council which would, by convention, be allowed to function as a responsible Cabinet whose advice would ordinarily be binding on the Viceroy. What was needed to change the whole atmosphere was an assurance on the lines of the assurance given by the Viceroy before the Congress accepted office in the provinces, that ordinarily he would abide by the advice of the members of the Executive Council. The solution appeared to be the most honourable way out of the impasse, and since the ultimate authority of the British Parliament would remain unchallenged, the devolution of powers to the National Government would not be so absolute. On April 9, however, when Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru went to see Sir Stafford Cripps to discuss with him his final formula over Defence discussion strayed over to the powers and responsibilities of the new National Government. The visitors found to their dismay that the whole of the earlier picture had vanished. According to Pandit Jawaharlal, Sir Stafford, at that fateful interview, began to talk of the Viceroy's Executive Council, and not a National Government. Words however did not matter but Sir Stafford also made it clear that there would be no essential change between the Viceroy's Council and the new Government. "We cannot change laws," Sir Stafford is reported to have stated, but when the Congress leaders asked: "Tell us what conventions you propose. Will they function as a Cabinet? Will the Viceroy work as a constitutional head?" Sir Stafford replied: "I am totally unable to say anything on the subject because it is completely within the discretion of the Viceroy. Go to him later on and discuss the matter with him. I cannot interfere or indicate what should be done." The Congress President had described what happened in these words: "We were informed that nothing could be said at that stage, even vaguely and generally, about the conventions that should govern the Government and the Viceroy. Ultimately, there was the possibility of the members of the Executive Council resigning or threatening to resign, if they disagreed with the Viceroy. That sanction or remedy is, of course, always open but it is curious that we should base our approach to a new government on the probability of conflict and resignation at the very outset."

Sir Firoz Khan Noon, the new Indian Defence Member, in his speech at Aligarh declared that during the period he was on the

Executive Council, the Viceroy had not once used his power to disregard the advice of his Council. If this was true, where was the difficulty in giving the assurance for which the Congress asked? It is wrong to maintain that it would be illegal under the present constitution for the Viceroy to give an assurance of the sort demanded by the Congress. Where the "safety, tranquillity or interests of British India" are essentially affected, the Viceroy "may" dissent from the majority of his Council. The word used by the Act is "may" and not "must" and the discretion given to him to do so or not can be exercised by him to allow these powers to fall into desuetude, without the change involving any amendment of the present Act by Parliament.

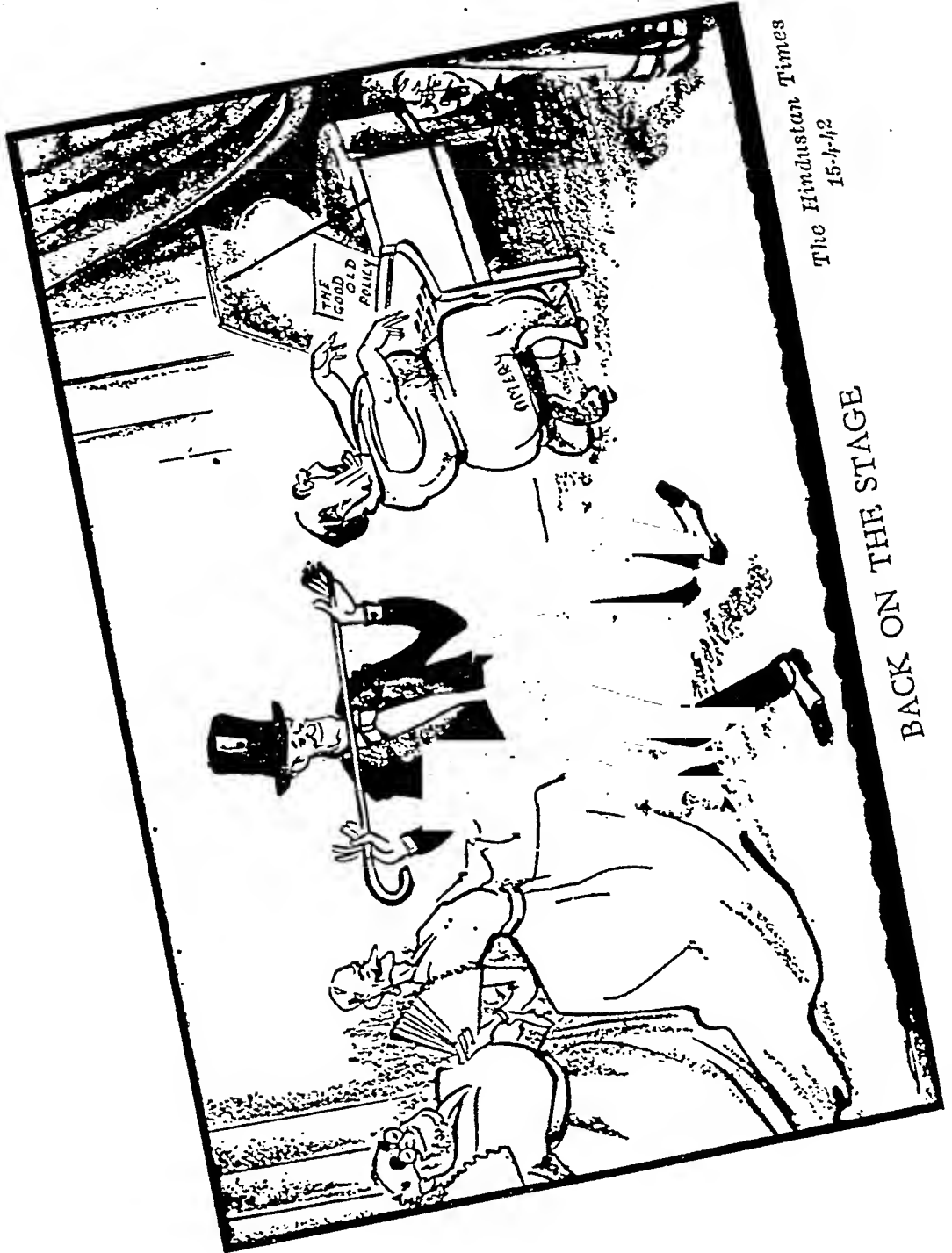
There is one other point in this connection. Sir Stafford Cripps had maintained that the formation of the National Government was the concern of his Excellency the Viceroy "and we have not attempted and should not attempt to take that responsibility out of his hands." For this, there was not the least constitutional justification. The members of the Executive Council are appointed by the King, though in their selection the Viceroy will naturally have a say. Under the Transitional Provisions of the Act of 1935 the Governor-General-in-Council is "under the general control of, and complies with such particular directions, if any, as may from time to time be given by the Secretary of State." To magnify the position of the Viceroy beyond all constitutional reason may have been good imperialist policy in the past, but Sir Stafford could hardly have been serious when he advanced this particular argument. Why after promising to remain in the country long enough to see the new National Government formed, Sir Stafford threw back the responsibility on the Viceroy, has been matter for speculation but it will be of interest to note, in this connection, that all through the negotiations, Sir Stafford used to discuss their progress with the Viceroy every night.

There was, no doubt, as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that a big change had occurred somewhere in the middle. The change was a clear reversal of policy. Sir Stafford Cripps has nowhere contradicted any of the statements attributed to him nor has he explained the contradiction involved between his previous explanations and the attitude he took up at the final interview which brought the negotiations to an end. Mr. Amery has, indeed, denied that Sir Stafford offered a real National Government to Indian leaders and Mr. Graham Spry, who was on Sir Stafford's Staff in India, has also denied that any such offer was made. But it is significant that the person most immediately concerned has not so far offered a word of explanation on the point. Why this change occurred and why there was a sudden reversal of policy making a settlement impossible is difficult to say in the absence of knowledge of the communications exchanged by the three parties concerned, namely, Sir Stafford Cripps, the Government of India and His Majesty's Government during those critical days. We need only record the fact of this change.

# WHY CRIPPS FAILED

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BACK ON THE STAGE



Once the breakdown had occurred, Sir Stafford Cripps shifted his ground and gave all sorts of reasons why the Congress suggestion for the formation of a truly National Government could not be accepted by the British Government. In his letter to the Congress President dated April 11, Sir Stafford said that this was not possible without constitutional changes of a most complicated character and on a very large scale and such changes could not be carried out during the period of hostilities. Secondly, such a nominated Cabinet (nominated, he added, presumably by the major political organizations) would be responsible to no one but itself, could not be removed and would in fact constitute "an absolute dictatorship of the majority." All the minorities would reject such an arrangement, as it would subject them to a permanent and autocratic majority in the Cabinet, a simple, and possibly inimical, majority, he called it, in his broadcast address. "Apart from this, however," he concluded, "until such time as the Indian peoples frame their new constitution, His Majesty's Government must continue to carry out its duties to those large sections of the Indian people to whom it has given its pledges."

The Congress had at one time urged the formation of a Provisional National Government which should be such as would command the confidence of all the elected elements in the Central Legislature. This would imply that the National Government would be composed of the representatives of the different parties in the Legislature and it would, in practice, act as though it were responsible to the elected elements in the Legislature. The present Legislative Assembly, it might be argued, had ceased to represent the electorate because of the repeated extensions granted to it. In that case, the Congress would not have objected to the holding of fresh elections. Those elections would, inevitably, be held with the restricted franchise under the 1919 constitution. This was not because the Congress did not desire to broad-base the new National Government on a wider electorate but because the British Government would not think of constitutional changes during the war. In the Provinces, where the Act of 1935 had been introduced, the electorate was considerably larger and if means could be found by which the Central Government could be made responsible to this wider electorate, the Congress would certainly not have objected to the arrangement. The device of indirect elections to the Federal Assembly incorporated in the Act of 1935 could have been utilized for this purpose. The suggestion that the Central Government should consist of the nominees of popular Provincial Governments was one which it was prepared to consider. During the Cripps negotiations, the assumption seems to have been that the Central Government would be formed by the nominees of the different parties like the Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and others. We have it on the authority of Mr. Asaf Ali—there was another member of the Working Committee who confirmed it—that this suggestion emanated from Sir Stafford Cripps himself. A

Government so formed would any day be in a position to get a vote of confidence in the Legislative Assembly, and even if there were members in it who had no seats in the Legislature, it would have been quite easy to find seats for them. If the Congress was called upon to form such a Government, it would have immediately tried to enlist the co-operation of other parties, but it did not insist upon its right as the largest single party. It was prepared to let other parties, the Muslim League or even the Non-Party Leaders, form the Government, and, for its part, was prepared to offer its co-operation to these parties in forming the Government. But whoever was called upon to form the Government would naturally complete the composition of the Government in consultation with the leaders of the other parties, the most capable and experienced individuals available in each party being selected for the different portfolios, with no thought of any party trying to get a dominant position within the Cabinet. In whatever way the National Government was formed, Congress leaders were clear in their minds as to the powers it must possess. It should not be an Executive Council carrying out the orders of the British Government. It must be treated as a responsible cabinet whose advice would ordinarily be binding on the Viceroy. Since all important minorities would be represented in the Government and the Government as a whole would be responsible to the Central Legislature, there could be no question of any minority being treated unjustly or the majority party trying to secure a dominant position for itself inside the Cabinet.

The objections which Sir Stafford Cripps brought against the formation of a National Government must be considered in this background. The formation of such a Government need not necessarily involve major constitutional changes. No one wanted to change the provisions of the Ninth Schedule to the Government of India Act of 1935 in any way except, perhaps, for one or two minor clauses like the one which insisted on three members being persons who had been in the service of the Crown for ten years. But Sir Stafford had agreed that this particular change could be made without difficulty. For the rest, what was wanted was the sincere desire to transfer power by means of agreed conventions, and not necessarily by any statutory changes in the constitution.

His second objection was that such a Cabinet nominated by the major political organizations would be responsible to no one but itself, and could not be removed. It would, according to him, be an irresponsible majority Government. In his final broadcast speech, Sir Stafford thought fit to give a caricatured description of what such a Government would mean. He said that it would amount to "the Government of India for an indefinite period by a set of persons, nominated by the Indian parties, responsible to no legislature or electorate, incapable of being changed and the majority of whom would be in a position to dominate large minorities." Phrases

such as "an irresponsible majority Government" and a "Government which could not be removed" come strangely from the representative of the British Government who are responsible for the present autocratic Government of India. The Socialist Cripps was appalled at the thought of a National Government being irremovable and irresponsible while apparently proud of the present Government which consists of the nominees of the British Government and is not removable by the Indian Legislature or people.

Apart from this argument, however, would a National Government be really irresponsible? The Congress asked for a National Government which would be responsible to the elected elements in the Central Legislature. The idea of a National Government composed of the nominees of the major political organizations was Sir Stafford Cripps' own. But even such a Government would gladly own responsibility to the Central Legislative Assembly as at present constituted or as it would be constituted after an election or even to the wider Provincial electorate, directly or indirectly. Moreover, a National Government, however indifferently constituted, would be more responsible than the present Government and to a far larger section of the people of this country. Irremovable it would be in the sense that Mr. Churchill's National Government is irremovable, as all parties would be represented in it and there would be no alternative to it. But this is inherent in any all-party government formed for the purpose of coping with a special emergency.

Then there was the objection that such a solution would be rejected by all minorities, as it would subject all of them to a permanent and autocratic majority in the Cabinet. That, at present, both majority and minority alike were being subjected to an autocratic Executive Council nominated by another Government appeared to Sir Stafford Cripps a perfectly normal state of affairs. Why should any minority object to a composite cabinet in which all minorities would be represented? Did Sir Stafford ever try to find out from the Congress whether it would waive its claim to majority representation in the National Government? We have Pandit Jawaharlal's authority for the statement that the Congress was not thinking in those terms. It was thinking only of a composite cabinet in which all parties would pull their weight and if the only bugbear, not of the minorities but of the British Government, was the possibility of a Congress majority in the cabinet, the Congress would certainly have agreed to under-representation in the Cabinet in order to get over the difficulty.

Incidentally, we may also dispose of the charge, sedulously propagated by British politicians, that the Congress was out to establish a totalitarian regime in which all power would vest in a single party, namely itself. The Congress President in his letter dated April 11 to Sir Stafford Cripps declared:

"We are not interested in the Congress as such gaining



power, but we are interested in the Indian people as a whole having freedom and power. How the Cabinet should be formed and should function was a question which might have been considered after the main question was decided; that is, the extent of power which the British Government would give up to the Indian people.

"You will remember that in my very first talk with you, I pointed out that the communal or like questions did not arise at this stage. As soon as the British Government made up its mind to transfer real power and responsibility, the other questions could be tackled successfully by those concerned. You gave me the impression that you agreed with this approach."

The Congress had never asked for power for itself as a party but for power for the people as a whole. As the only large political organization in which all sections of the Indian people were represented, it had always spoken in the name of the country as a whole, and not in the interests of this section or that section. Its claim to represent the people as a whole has been challenged in many quarters, but even these quarters have not dared to deny that it speaks for the overwhelming majority of the people and includes in its following a large number of Mussalmans.

The truth is His Majesty's Government were not prepared to transfer real power to the representatives of the Indian people. What they wanted was the moral prestige which they would get both within India and in the outside world by the leaders of the main political bodies being associated with the Viceroy in the Government of India under the present constitution and the material asset such association would mean to their war-effort. What was offered was subordinate association, not equal partnership. No wonder Congress decided to have nothing to do with such a scheme. The British Government's mind had not outgrown the stage of looking upon Indian difficulties as obstacles in the way of transfer of power. In a country so vast as India and with a social structure so complicated as ours, difficulties will continually arise, problem succeeding problem as a continual challenge to Indian statesmanship. These problems and these difficulties are for Indians to settle, as best as they can, and not for Britain to exploit. The only realistic attitude for Britain to adopt is to find as representative a Provisional Government as possible and then transfer to such a Government all her responsibilities. There is no other way in which the Indian problem can be solved.

#### X—THE BREAKDOWN

WE have referred in an earlier chapter to Sir Stafford's anxiety to see His Majesty's Government continue to carry out their duties to people to whom they have given their pledges, pending the framing of the new constitution. What did Sir Stafford mean by this? In none of his subsequent speeches, statements and broadcasts

did Sir Stafford explain. Did he mean that till a new constitution was framed His Majesty's Government must continue to safeguard the interests of minorities in fulfilment of their previous pledges or did he mean that, apart from other objections, His Majesty's Government did not contemplate any devolution of their responsibilities for the Government of India to the representatives of the Indian people till such time as a new constitution was framed? Curiously enough, Sir Stafford has so far not allowed one word to escape his lips to throw light on so crucial a point.

But light has come from a different quarter. Winding up the debate on the failure of the Cripps mission in the House of Commons on April 28, Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, referred to the invitation to Indian leaders to participate in the government of their country and said: "It could not be a question of control free from the ultimate responsibility of Parliament here exercised through the Secretary of State and the Viceroy." Reverting to the same point again Mr. Amery added: "Within the limits of the ultimate responsibility of the Viceroy and Parliament, who in this matter are in a sense trustees for the future constitution of India, Sir Stafford Cripps was given the widest latitude." Though Sir Stafford Cripps was maintaining a sphinx-like silence, Mr. Amery once again developed the point in the course of the debate on Mr. Churchill's statement on the Indian situation in September. Mr. Amery spoke of the wide discretion given to Sir Stafford Cripps and said: "All this was subject to that one consideration, that the measure of power we did give now to the Government of India's political leaders must be subject, in the last resort, to ultimate control by Parliament." Later in reply to a question in Parliament, with reference to the statement made by Sir Sultan Ahmed in the Indian Legislature that the British Government could not resist a National Government presented by all Indian political parties, Mr. Amery said that the conditions mentioned by Sir Sultan Ahmed as essential for the formation of an Indian National Government were in accordance with the repeatedly declared policy of the British Government. He added: "In any such National Government that were constituted, there would, of course, have to be the ultimate responsibility to Parliament, under the existing constitution, pending the establishment of an agreed Indian constitution."

There can be no mistaking the meaning of all these statements. "Ultimate responsibility of Parliament," the Secretary of State and Viceroy being "trustees for the future constitution of India"—the phrases were familiar to Indian ears. Even if the Congress demand had been conceded, the "ultimate" statutory powers of Parliament, the Secretary of State and the Viceroy would still be there—powers of interference with the decision of the National Government. What Mr. Amery wants to maintain is not the "ultimate responsibility" of Parliament but the continual assertion of its authority in Indian

affairs through the Secretary of State and the Viceroy. What the Congress asked for was a National Government whose advice the Viceroy would not, ordinarily, disregard. What Mr. Amery offers to leaders of Indian parties is membership of the Executive Council with the overriding powers of the Viceroy and the Secretary of State absolutely intact. In short, Indian national leaders are being asked to become parts of the machinery of British Imperialism in India.

Sir Stafford had made much of the minorities objecting to a National Government possessing the powers for which the Congress asked. Mr. Amery has now cleared the air. Even if all Indian parties agree to constitute a National Government, that Government can function only within the limitations imposed by the present constitution and the existing powers of the Viceroy, the Secretary of State and Parliament. Though Mr. Amery did not say so openly, this had, evidently, been clearly explained to Sir Stafford Cripps before he set out on his mission.

Why then did Sir Stafford make no mention of this either at the time of the negotiations or after? If this was the intention of His Majesty's Government—in fact it appears to have been a definite decision—was it fair to India to couch the decision in the equivocal language of the Draft Declaration? Was it right on the part of Sir Stafford Cripps to have kept so important a matter a close secret all through the period of the negotiations? If these were his instructions, he clearly exceeded them in explaining the powers of the National Government in the terms he did to the Congress leaders and the Press conference of March 29. Did Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery pull him up when they came to know about it and was this the secret of his sudden turn-round on or about April 9? Was this the reason why no official report of the proceedings of the conference was made available to the press, though it was promised? Is this again the reason why, in spite of the emphatic assertions of the Congress leaders as to the manner in which he described the powers and functions of the National Government to them during their first interview with him, Sir Stafford Cripps has not cared to issue a single denial? Did the consideration that for His Majesty's Government to make an open avowal, at the very beginning, of their intention to keep all their existing powers intact would create the worst possible impression in America, and in fact would make the mission a still-born one, have anything to do with the tactics employed? If Indian leaders knew at the beginning that this was the intention, Sir Stafford Cripps would have been spared the arduous journey which he undertook. Who then is responsible for the breakdown of the negotiations? In India, at least, there is no doubt as to the answer. Truth, like murder, will out. There is evidence that the outside world, through all the smokescreen of propaganda, is getting glimpses as to the real cause of the breakdown. Mr. Frank MacDermot, the special correspondent at Washington of the *Sunday Times*, recently wrote to his paper, complaining that American critics

described Sir Stafford Cripps as one who, in his first talks with the Congress, offered "real" National Government immediately, but afterwards went back on this offer and who is now concealing the true cause of the failure of his mission. Mr. Louis Fischer, writing in the *New York Nation*, after a detailed examination of the negotiations, places the blame squarely upon the representatives of the British Government.

When a demand was made in Parliament in the course of the debate on Mr. Churchill's statement on India on September 10, 1942, for some explanation of the sudden and totally unlooked for collapse which occurred about April 8, Sir Stafford Cripps said: "The change which occurred took place on the intervention of Mr. Gandhi. The Congress Working Committee had passed a resolution accepting the proposals. Mr. Gandhi intervened and subsequently the resolution was reversed." So far as is known in this country, there was only one resolution which the Congress Working Committee passed. This was the resolution handed over to Sir Stafford Cripps on April 2, but not published till after the negotiations had broken down. Mahatma Gandhi came to Delhi at Sir Stafford Cripps' invitation and saw him on March 27. He left Delhi on April 4 for Wardha, after the Working Committee had passed its resolution but before the negotiations which were still going on broke down. In the issue of *Harijan* dated June 28, 1942, Gandhiji had referred to the part played by him in the deliberations of the Working Committee. He wrote:

"Sir Stafford knows that I was disinclined to proceed to New Delhi. Having gone there, I intended to return the same day that I reached there. But Maulana Sahab would not let me go. I wish I could have induced the Working Committee to take up its stand on pure non-violence. But it did not and could not. With it, rightly, politics were all important and it could not, not having the conviction, allow its deliberations to be affected by the issue of non-violence. The deliberations, therefore, of the Working Committee at New Delhi were carried on without any interference or guidance on my part. Therefore the negotiations had nothing to do, at any stage, with the question of non-violence."

The Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, had referred to such reports earlier at the Press conference he addressed on April 11. He there stated:

"Mahatma Gandhi's views as regards participation in any war are well known and it would be entirely untrue to suggest that the Working Committee's decisions have in any way been influenced by that view. In fact Mahatma Gandhi made it perfectly clear to the Working Committee that they were free to come to any decision on the merits of the proposals. Mahatmaji did not really want to participate in the earlier sittings of the Working Committee, but he was persuaded by me to stay on from day to day."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru referring to these reports at a Press interview in Bombay on June 17 said:

"The statement of Sir Stafford to the effect that the Congress Working Committee had apparently accepted the proposals and it was only after further consultations with Mahatma Gandhi that they were turned down is entirely incorrect. It is true that the newspapers were making guesses, sometimes stating that the Congress Working Committee was likely to accept the proposals, but Sir Stafford ought to know that these newspaper stories had no basis."

But the most emphatic denial of all came from Mr. C. Rajagopalachari who declared:

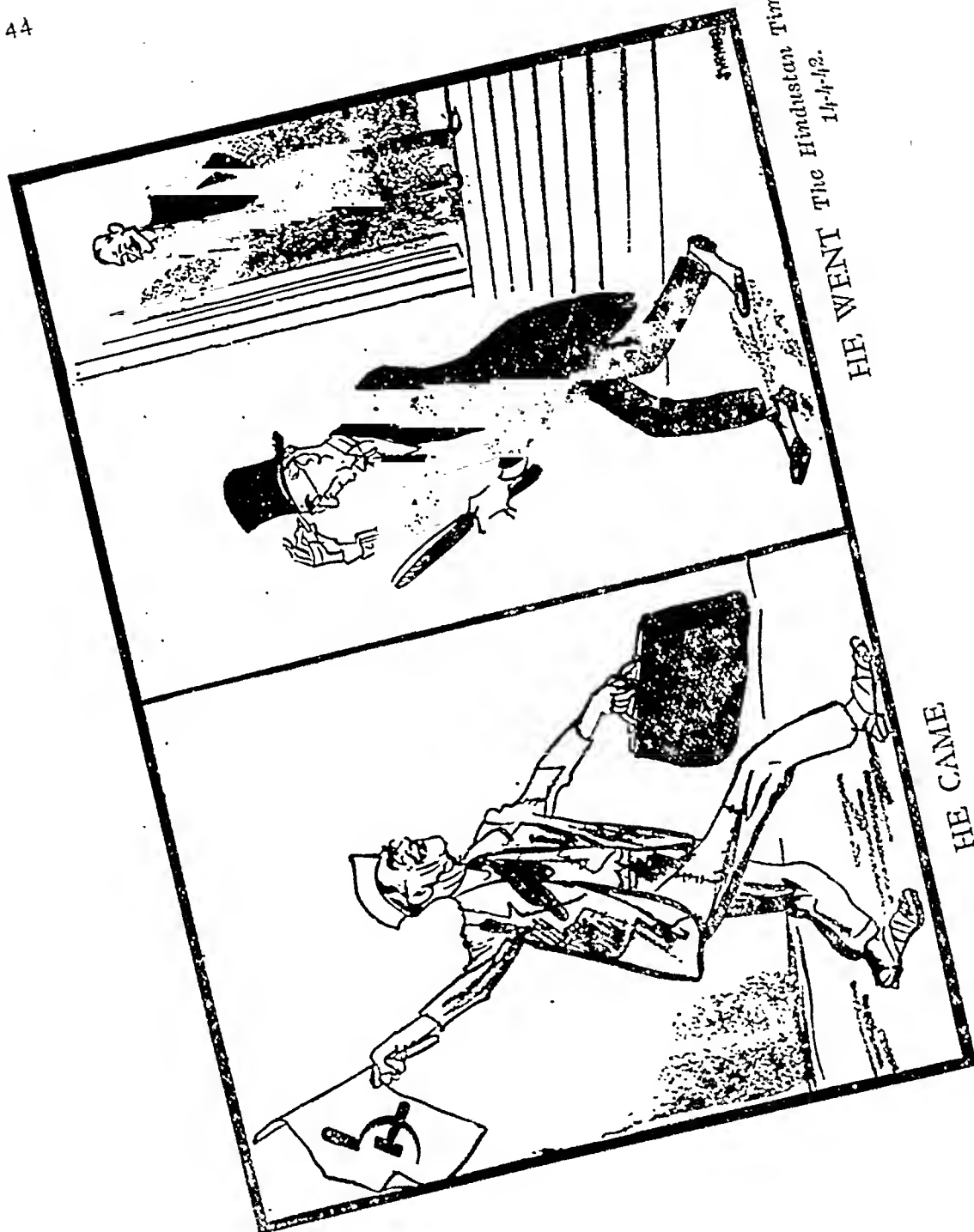
"Gandhiji is in prison and cannot again contradict this baseless story that will go into Hansard. I was present from beginning to end during these talks, and I can say authoritatively that Mahatmaji, who was absent from Delhi during the later stages, was not responsible for anything that took place. In spite of Mahatmaji's adverse opinion expressed at the preliminary stage, the Working Committee entered into discussions with Sir Stafford and carried on according to their own policy and Mahatmaji did not interfere."

Sir Stafford has had a reputation in India to lose, but he has not enhanced it by backing a baseless charge against Gandhiji, which has been so promptly denied by persons in a better position to know.

Next to Gandhiji, British statesmen and publicists have been trying to throw the blame for the failure on the Congress. It is true that Sir Stafford carried on prolonged negotiations with the Congress only and decided to leave as soon as Congress rejected his scheme. Why he attached so much importance to Congress acceptance of his scheme while practically ignoring the other parties, is for Sir Stafford to explain. Sir Stafford had also told Pandit Jawaharlal that he was only concerned with agreement between three groups in India, the British Government, the Congress and the Muslim League and that he did not care whether others agreed or not. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru has also stated that "Sir Stafford Cripps concentrated in India on the Congress and the Muslim League almost wholly, to the exclusion of other parties." But apart from this, the Congress was not the only party which rejected his proposals. Every organized party in India which could claim to have any sort of following rejected his scheme, though their reasons for doing so were not the same as those of the Congress. The Congress Working Committee finally rejected the proposals on April 10 and the whole correspondence was released for publication the next day. The same day, the resolution of the Muslim League Working Committee

was also released for publication. It stated that the proposals in their present form were unacceptable to the League mainly because the Draft Declaration did not concede the principle of Pakistan in the form demanded by the League. The League resolution said nothing about the interim arrangements, as no complete picture was available. The Hindu Mahasabha had rejected the proposals as early as April 1 because the right given to the provinces not to accede to the Union threatened to disrupt the unity of India and the Declaration was "nebulous, vague and unsatisfactory" with regard to the interim arrangements. The Sikh All-Party Conference declined to have anything to do with the scheme because the conference considered that the proposal to give the provinces the right of non-accession was a threat to the integrity of India and "the cause of the Sikh community had been lamentably betrayed." The Nationalist Party in the Indian Legislative Assembly considered the proposals and rejected them the next day. The depressed classes leaders, Dr. Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah, and the Working Committee of the All-India Depressed Classes League also turned down the proposals in the next few days, though for different reasons. The Working Committee of the All-India Momin Conference came to the same conclusion, characterising the scheme as "absolutely unsatisfactory" and miserably falling "short of the expectations and aspirations of the Muslim masses." The Standing Committee of the All-India States Peoples Conference also condemned these proposals as they were "utterly harmful and injurious to the cause of freedom both in the States and in India as a whole." Thus not one party was prepared to accept the proposals as they stood. In these circumstances, to throw the whole blame for the failure of the mission on the Congress, is to do something which facts do not justify. The Congress asked for a really "National Government" composed of all parties with the Viceroy acting as a constitutional head but without changing the present constitution. The British Government, as Mr. Amery has now clearly stated, were prepared only to extend the old August Offer so as to Indianize the whole of the Viceroy's Executive Council with the exception of the office of the Commander-in-Chief. There was to be no change in the present subordinate status of the members of the Executive Council and the control of the Secretary of State and the British Government was to remain as before. If by refusing to have anything to do with this pseudo-National Government, the Congress can be said to have wrecked the negotiations, it is a charge to feel proud of. The reservation about the powers of the British Government to which Sir Stafford Cripps made no reference at all—now revealed to the world by Mr. Amery—made the failure of the mission inevitable from the very start. The decision to send the mission, in spite of this knowledge, must have been taken because of the British Government's anxiety to placate American opinion. At one moment it almost seemed as if they had succeeded, but America, no less than India, now knows not only why

## WHY CRIPPS FAILED



HE WENT The Hindustan Times  
14-4-42.

HE CAME

Sir Stafford Cripps was sent to India but why he failed.

## XI THE AFTERMATH

WHILE the mission did not succeed so far as the immediate object for which it was sent, did it succeed in achieving anything of permanent value in the relationship between two countries? In his speech in the House of Commons on April 28, Sir Stafford Cripps claimed three things on the credit side, namely, (1) the advantage accruing from the method adopted, a precise and clear statement discussed in India with Indian leaders by a member of the War Cabinet, (2) the sincerity of British intention to grant India full self-government at the earliest practicable moment and to allow her to determine the form of her constitution, and (3) the whole discussions proceeding upon a basis of frank and mutual understanding and in an atmosphere of friendliness. He concluded by saying that they had taken a step forward, especially as far as younger elements in India were concerned.

So far as the intangible factors mentioned by Sir Stafford Cripps are concerned, events subsequent to the failure of his mission have shown how far they are founded on realities. As for the more specific claims, Sir Stafford Cripps never made it plain what in fact had been withdrawn and what not. Mr. Amery has tried to rectify the omission. In the course of a debate on April 28 Mr. Amery said that what had not been withdrawn was their main object and purpose "that India should, as soon as possible, obtain full freedom under constitutional arrangements of her own devising and suited to her own peculiar conditions." "On the other hand," he said, "the particular method which we suggest for arriving at a constitutional settlement, more particularly the present provincial basis, both for setting up a constitution-making Assembly and for non-accession is not meeting with sufficient support for us to press it further." The Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, in his statement of September 10 merely said: "The broad principles of the declaration made by the British Government . . . must be taken as the settled policy of the British Crown and Parliament. These principles stand in their full scope and integrity. No one can add to them and no one can take anything away."

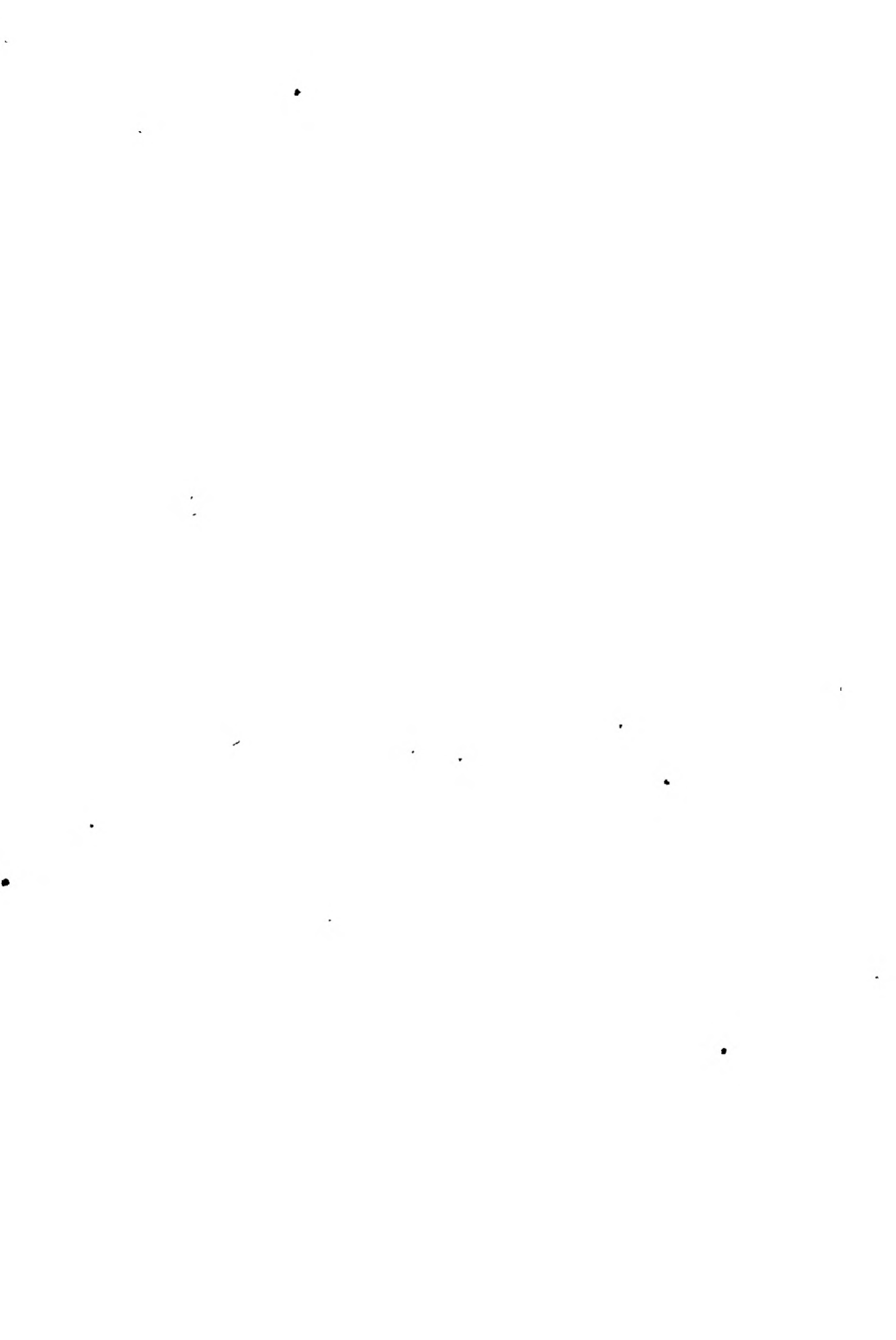
The net result seems to be this: the promise of Dominion Status for India stands, as also the recognition of India's right to frame her own constitution. Since the right to secede from the Commonwealth was not mentioned in the Preamble to the Declaration but in Clause C (ii) no one knows whether this remains or goes. As for the present, Mr. Amery has clarified the situation beyond all possibility of misunderstanding. Indian leaders can come in as members of the Viceroy's Executive Council which will be completely Indianized, except for the presence of the Commander-in-Chief, but the powers of the Viceroy, the Secretary of State and the British Parliament under the Act of 1919 will continue as before, till the new constitution



is framed. Even if all parties agree and ask for a National Government, such a Government can function only within the ambit of the statutory powers of the British Parliament under the present constitution. The position thus taken by His Majesty's Government affects not only the present but also the future. There is to be no transfer of real power at present, even if there is complete agreement among Indian parties. As for the future, the Cripps Declaration differed from the Irwin Declaration in that it mentioned a definite time for the attainment of Dominion Status. "Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities," the Draft Declaration stated, "steps shall be taken to set up in India...an elected body charged with the task of framing a new constitution for India." With the withdrawal of the procedure for the framing of the new constitution, the alternative mentioned in the Declaration, namely, "the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agreeing upon some other form before the end of hostilities" comes into operation. But if there is no such agreement, then the promise of Dominion Status after the war becomes as vague as it was ever before, because of the absence of any means by which it can be implemented. Incidentally this failure to agree is generally referred to as a reproach against the Congress. The Muslim League today is prepared to negotiate only with any party which accepts its Pakistan demand. It is not prepared to co-operate with other parties, on the basis of leaving all controversial issues for settlement after the war. For the British Government to insist on agreement under such conditions, is a demand on the majority to surrender to the minority. That is what Mr. Amery's statement implies. The Congress for its part did not want to carry its opposition to the scheme of partition to the point of wrecking all possibilities of immediate agreement. It was prepared to leave this, and similar other issues, to be settled after the war, provided Britain agreed to present transfer of power. As for the future, since the prospects of agreement with an intransigent minority are not bright, there does not appear to be much danger of Britain being called upon to take any steps to fulfil her conditional promise of freedom to India after the war.

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## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX 1

### DRAFT DECLARATION

His Majesty's Government, having considered the anxieties expressed in this country and in India as to the fulfilment of promises made in regard to the future of India, have decided to lay down in precise and clear terms the steps which they propose shall be taken for the earliest possible realization of self-government in India. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion associated with the United Kingdom and other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic and external affairs.

His Majesty's Government therefore make the following declaration:

(a) Immediately upon cessation of hostilities, steps shall be taken to set up in India in manner described hereafter an elected body charged with the task of framing a new constitution for India.

(b) Provision shall be made, as set out below, for participation of Indian States in the constitution-making body.

(c) His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the constitution so framed subject only to

(i) The right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new constitution to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides.

With such non-accessing provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new constitution giving them the same full status as the Indian Union and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down.

(ii) The signing of a treaty which shall be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body. This treaty will cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands; it will make provision, in accordance with undertakings given by His Majesty's Government, for the protection of racial and religious minorities; but will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in future its relationship to other member States of the British Commonwealth.

Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the constitution it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its treaty arrangements so far as this may be required in the new situation.

(d) The constitution-making body shall be composed as follows unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities.

Immediately upon the result being known of provincial elections which will be necessary at the end of hostilities, the entire membership of the Lower Houses of Provincial legislatures shall as a single electoral college proceed to the election of the constitution-making body by the system of proportional representation. This new body

shall be in number about 1/10th of the number of the electoral college.

Indian States shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion as to their total population as in the case of representatives of British India as a whole and with the same powers as British Indian members.

(e) During the critical period which now faces India and until the new constitution can be framed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the Defence of India as part of their world war effort but the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India. His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India.

## APPENDIX II

### CRIPPS' BROADCAST

*The following is the text of a broadcast talk given by Sir Stafford Cripps from the Delhi station of All India Radio on March 30, 1942:*

I want tonight to give you a short explanation of the document which was published in the Press this morning, and which gives the proposals of the British War Cabinet for the future of India, a document unanimously agreed upon by every member of that Cabinet.

First of all you will want to know what object we had in view. Well, we wanted to make it quite clear and beyond any possibility of doubt or question that the British Government and the British people desire the Indian peoples to have full self-government, with a constitution as free in every respect as our own in Great Britain or as of any of the great Dominion members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. In the words of the Draft Declaration, India would be "associated with the United Kingdom and other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or external affairs."

There is, however, an existing constitution which regulates the Central and Provincial Governments of India and everyone agrees that in these troublous times we cannot here and now set about forging a new constitution. It is far too important a matter for the future of India to be improvised in a hurried way.

The principle on which these proposals are based is that the new constitution should be framed by the elected representatives of the Indian peoples themselves. So we propose that immediately hostilities are ended a constitution-making body should be set up consisting of elected representatives from British India, and if the Indian States wish, as we hope they will, to become part of the new Indian Union, they too will be invited to send their representatives to this constitution-making body, though, if they do, that will not, of itself, bind them to become members of the Union. That is the broad outline of the future.

Now what is to happen in the meantime?

The British people are determined to do their utmost for the defence of India and we are confident that, in that great task, the Indian peoples of all races and religions are eager to play their full part.

Let me read to you what the statement says on this point:

"During the critical period which now faces India and until the new constitution can be framed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war effort, but the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India, with the co-operation of the peoples of India. His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India." So ends the document.

The Governor-General whose task it is to form the Central Government of India has done his utmost to assist me with my mission and I am certain that the Indian leaders can rely upon him to find the best way in consultation with them for carrying out the general principle laid down in the clause that I have just read to you.

So much for the general framework of the proposals. But, as we all know, the most vital and difficult question is that which concerns the interests of the various communities amongst the Indian peoples.

I will not attempt to go into any of the historical origins of these difficulties, let us instead look at them as a present fact. In the great sub-continent of India there is more than one people, there are many peoples and races as there are in the great sub-continent of Russia. Our object is to give to the Indian peoples full self-government with complete freedom as to how they will devise and organize their own constitution.

There are those who claim that India should form a single united country, there are others who say it should be divided up into two, three or more separate countries. There are those who claim that provincial autonomy should be very wide with but few centrally controlled federal services; others stress the need for centralization in view of the growing complexity of economic development.

These and many other and various ideas are worthy to be explored and debated, but it is for the Indian peoples, and not for any outside authority, to decide under which of these forms India will in the future govern herself.

If the Indian peoples ask our help, it will, of course, be gladly given, but it is for you, the Indian peoples, to discuss and decide upon your future constitution. We shall look on with deep interest and hope that your wisdom will guide you truly in this great adventure.

We ask you, therefore, to come together—all religions and races—in a constitution-making body as soon as hostilities are over to frame your own constitution.

We have specified the form which that body will take, unless, and this is an important point, the leaders of the principal sections of

Indian opinion agree between themselves before the end of hostilities upon some other and better form.

That constitution-making body will have as its object the framing of a single constitution for the whole of India—that is, of British India, together with such of the Indian States as may decide to join in.

But we realize this very simple fact. If you want to persuade a number of people who are inclined to be antagonistic to enter the same room, it is unwise to tell them that once they go in there is no way out—they are to be for ever locked in together.

It is much wiser to tell them they can go in and if they find they can't come to a common decision, then there is nothing to prevent those who wish, from leaving again by another door. They are much more likely all to go in if they have knowledge that they can by their free will go out again if they cannot agree.

Well, that is what we say to the provinces of India. Come together to frame a common constitution—if you find after all your discussion and all the give and take of a constitution-making assembly that you cannot overcome your differences and that some provinces are still not satisfied with the constitution, then such provinces can go out and remain out if they wish and just the same degree of self-government and freedom will be available for them as for the Union itself, that is to say complete self-government.

We hope and expect to see an Indian Union strong and united because it is founded upon the free consent of all its peoples, but it is not for us Britishers to dictate to you, the Indian peoples, you will work out and decide that problem for yourselves.

So we provide the means and the road by which you can attain that form of the absolute and united self-government that you desire at the earliest possible moment. In the past we have waited for the different Indian communities to come to a common decision as to how a new constitution for a self-governing India should be framed and, because there has been no agreement amongst the Indian leaders, the British Government has been accused by some of using this fact to delay the granting of freedom to India. We are now giving the lead that has been asked for and it is in the hands of Indians and Indians only whether they will accept that lead and so attain their own freedom. If they fail to accept this opportunity the responsibility for that failure must rest with them.

We ask you to accept this fulfilment of our pledges in the past and it is that request that I have put before your leaders in the document which you have now seen.

As regards the position of minority communities within the new Indian Union, I am confident that the constitution-making body will make just provision for their protection. But in view of the undertakings given to these minorities by His Majesty's Government in the past we propose that in the Treaty, which, under the draft Declaration, will be concluded between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body, the new Indian Union should undertake to protect the rights of these minorities. If there should be any non-acceding provinces a similar treaty provision would be made in respect of minority communities within their borders.

I have already indicated to you the position as to the immediate future.

I know that his Excellency the Viceroy has the greatest hope

that the acceptance in principle of this document by the leaders of Indian opinion will make it possible for him to start forthwith upon the consultations which will enable him to implement the principle laid down in the last paragraph of the document which I have already read over to you.

It contains one essential reservation—that in respect of the responsibility for Defence. This reservation does not mean that the Governor-General and his Executive Council will or indeed could be excluded from taking an effective share in the counsels for the defence of India. In this wide-flung war, defence cannot be localized in a single country and its preparation must permeate the activities of every department of Government and must demand from every department the fullest co-operation. If His Majesty's Government are to take full responsibility for the conduct of the naval, military and air defence of India, as it is their duty to do, then the defence of India must be dealt with by them as part of the world war effort in which they are now engaged, and the direction of that defence must rest in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief under the War Cabinet and their highest staff officers. But, as I have already pointed out, the Government of India must also have an effective share in the Defence counsels and so we have decided that the Commander-in-Chief must retain his position as a Member of the Executive Council.

In order, however, that India may have her full voice in this central control of strategy, defensive and offensive, not only in India itself but in all the inter-related theatres of war, we have invited the appointment of a representative Indian to the War Cabinet and to the Pacific Council of the United Nations—that is one of the ways in which India will have her full say in the counsels of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations as an equal partner. And when it comes to the making of the peace, India will appoint her own representatives to the Peace Conference side by side with those of the other free Nations and so make her contribution to the building of a new world order.

I am confident that nothing further or more complete could be done towards the immediate realization of the just claims and demands of the Indian peoples. Our proposals are definite and precise. If they were to be rejected by the leaders of Indian opinion, there would be neither the time nor the opportunity to reconsider this matter till after the war and it would be a bitter blow to the friends of India all over the world.

I consider it a high honour that it has fallen to my lot to be the messenger of the War Cabinet in a matter of such vital and far-reaching importance to the future world order. I personally am convinced of the soundness and completeness of these proposals, and I have asked your leaders to give to them an ungrudging acceptance.

There will still be difficulties perhaps—the result of the distrust which has grown up between us in past years—but I ask you to turn your back upon that past, to accept my hand, our hand of friendship and trust and to allow us to join with you for the time being in working to establish and complete your freedom and your self-government. This as you may know has long been a cause dear to my heart and it is with the greatest hopes that I look to the events of the next few days which may if wisely handled seal for ever your freedom and our friendship.

Your country today is in peril from a cruel aggressor, an aggressor whose hand has soaked in blood and suffering great areas of China with its friendly and democratic peoples, an aggressor allied



to those nations who have deluged with tragedy the once peaceful plains of Russia. Against those aggressors we and the Allied Nations will fight to victory.

The outlook is overcast for the moment, but believe me I have no doubt as to the final result. Russia, the United States, China and Great Britain have resources which the Axis and its allies can never defeat.

We stand by our duty, growing out of our past historical associations, to give you every protection that we can, but with your willing help and co-operation it can be made more effective and more powerful.

Let us enter upon this primary task of the defence of India in the now sure knowledge that when we emerge from the fire and travail of war it will be to build a free India upon foundations wrought by the Indian peoples themselves, and, to forge a long lasting and free friendship between our two peoples. Regrets and recriminations as to past can have no place beside the confident and sure hopes of the future, when a Free India will take her rightful place as a co-worker with the other free nations in that world reconstruction which alone can make the toil and suffering of the war worth while. Let the dead past bury its dead! and let us march together side by side through the night of high endeavour and courage to the already waking dawn of a new world of liberty for all the peoples.

### APPENDIX III

#### PRESS CONFERENCE

*The following is a report which appeared in the Indian press of the Press conference held by Sir Stafford Cripps at New Delhi on March 29, 1942, at which he handed over copies of the Draft Declaration to press representatives. Though official reporters were seen taking notes and Sir Stafford promised that the official report would be made available to the press, no such report was supplied:*

"The Constituent Assembly can start with a declaration of Independence," said Sir Stafford Cripps at a Press conference held at New Delhi on March 29, 1942, explaining the implications of the Cabinet's draft declaration. Whatever the legal arguments about the Balfour Declaration were, it had been accepted as a fact that the Dominions could secede. Sir Stafford, therefore, agreed that the Constituent Assembly was completely free to decide whether the new Union of India should remain within the Empire or go out.

According to the post-war plan outlined by Sir Stafford, a Constituent Assembly is to be set up immediately after the cessation of hostilities. The procedure is as follows—first, new elections to provincial legislatures; second, the entire membership of the Lower Houses electing one-tenth of their number, by proportional representation, to the Constituent Assembly; and, third, the signing of a treaty between H.M.'s Government and the constitution-making body for "the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands." The States are to be represented in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of British India representatives, but it has been left to the Rulers of the States to decide how their representatives should be chosen—whether by election or nomination. The result will be that, while two-thirds of the Constituent Assembly will consist of elected representatives from British India, the remaining one-third will merely be the nominated representatives of the Rulers of the States. With reference to this point, Sir Stafford ex-

plained that under the existing treaty arrangements, they could not force the States to participate in the Constituent Assembly or compel them to choose their representatives in any particular manner. "We have not the same control over the Indian States as we have over British India," said Sir Stafford.

Certain interesting points were, in this connection, clarified by Sir Stafford. He said, firstly, that it was obligatory on every province to send representatives to the Constituent Assembly. Secondly, though they could not force any State to join it, the desire of the British Government was that as many States as possible should participate in it. Thirdly, there would have to be some method for grouping small States. Fourthly, there would be no insistence on any reservation for the Services or British vested interests. Fifthly, the new Union of India would be completely free to decide its future relationship with other countries including the United Kingdom. Sixthly, if any differences were to arise in connection with the treaty, there might have to be some kind of arbitration. Seventhly, the members elected to the Constituent Assembly need not necessarily be members of the electoral college but should be persons capable of being members. And, eighthly, Sir Stafford gave it as his personal estimate that the Constituent Assembly might take about a year to complete its work.

Describing the Constituent Assembly as a sovereign body which was free to do anything—even to say that they did not want a Governor-General—Sir Stafford said that they did not want to impose anything on India, "not even a time-limit." He went on to say that if the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities came forward with some other agreed plan for the composition of the constitution-making body, H.M.'s Government would accept it. Asked what was meant by "cessation of hostilities," Sir Stafford said there was a difference between this and the "termination of the war." There might be a difference of one or two years between the cessation of hostilities and the end of the war. The idea was that the constitution-making body should be set up as early as practicable after the cessation of hostilities. Sir Stafford also said that the decisions of the Constituent Assembly would be by majority votes.

Sir Stafford then explained the plan for accession or secession of provinces. If at the end of the Constituent Assembly proceedings, any province or provinces did not wish to accept the new constitution and join the Union, it was free to keep out—provided the Provincial Assembly of that province, by a substantial vote, say not less than 60 per cent., decided against accession. If it was less than 60 per cent., the minority could claim a plebiscite of the whole province for ascertaining the will of the people. In the case of the plebiscite, a bare majority would be enough. Sir Stafford explained that for completing accession there would have to be a positive vote from the Provincial Assembly concerned. The non-accessing provinces could, if they wanted, combine into a separate union through a separate Constituent Assembly, but in order to make such a Union practicable they should be geographically contiguous.

With reference to the interim war period, Sir Stafford said that the British Government could not transfer to the Government of India the responsibility for and the control and direction of the defence of India. "If there is an Indian Defence Member, he will not be able to direct or control," he said. Drawing a distinction between control and direction, which, under the orders of the War Cabinet, the Commander-in-Chief exercised, and the organization of military, moral and material resources which was the task of the Government of India, Sir Stafford expressed the view that they would be false to

their duties if the British Government did not retain this responsibility and control, as it was necessary for the effective defence of India. "The defence of India will not be in Indian hands, even if all the parties want it," he declared. It would be the worst thing for the defence of India; it would disorganize the whole defence arrangements, and such disorganization would be fatal. He then pointed out that the Government of India would have a representative on the War Cabinet and have the same position in that body as Australia or any other Dominion.

Sir Stafford explained the difference between technical military control and political control. If the Indian Army were to be under the Government of India and the British troops here were to be under the British Government, it would mean that there would be two different armies in this country under two different political controls. That, he said, would lead to confusion and inefficiency.

Sir Stafford declined to say anything specific about the last paragraph of the document dealing with immediate arrangements envisaged in the Government of India Executive, but he said: "The intention of this paragraph is to indicate to the Governor-General, who is responsible for the formation of the Government of India, the broad lines upon which in accordance with the scheme that Government may be formed. All the details of the formation of that Government are for the Governor-General to decide, and we have not attempted and should not attempt to take that responsibility out of his hands." Nothing was obligatory on the Governor-General, but he could Indianize the Executive Council. The general direction was laid down in the paragraph. The object was to give the fullest measure of government to the Indian people at the present time consistent with the possibilities of the present constitution which could not be changed till the end of the war. But there might be some small change to be made with regard to the composition of the Executive Council, particularly the condition that there should be three service members of ten years' standing.

Sir Stafford added: "The intention of the document, as far as possible, subject to the reservation of defence, is to put power in the hands of Indian leaders."

Sir Stafford concluded: "So far as the Governor-General could, within the sections of the existing constitution, he would attempt to form his Executive Council with a body of Indian leaders who could give leadership to the country and could help to direct the counsels of the country in the Executive Council of the Commonwealth, in the War Cabinet and of the United Nations in the Pacific War Council."

Regarding the working of the new Council under the proposed interim scheme, which, he said, covered the provincial field also, Sir Stafford said that it would have to be within the present constitution, but he indicated that a good deal could be done by changing the conventions or adopting new ones—he particularly mentioned that the Executive Council could become a Cabinet.

Sir Stafford made it clear that "the scheme goes through as a whole or is rejected as a whole." It would not be possible to retain only the part relating to the immediate arrangements at the Centre and discard the rest of the draft scheme.

"Would you not agree to joint responsibility between England and India for defence?" asked a correspondent.

Sir Stafford said joint responsibility for defence had been con-

ceded so far as the document laid it down, that His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war effort, but the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India.

"Would you agree to give internal defence to an Indian?"

"There is a fallacy in speaking of the internal defence of India," replied Sir Stafford. When there was a state of war it was impossible to dissociate internal from external defence. Taking a hypothetical case like the movement of troops from, say, Madras to Calcutta, he said it might be said to be a purely internal matter but really it was a question which depended upon a multitude of other questions such as whether the Japanese were likely to take Ceylon, the position in Burma, the placing of the fleet in the Pacific and whether there were other troops available to move from the Middle East, etc. It would be impossible to dissociate the internal movement of troops from the general strategy and tactics of the war. So long, again, as a large portion of the effective army, air force and navy had to be brought from British and other Dominion sources or others, it was essential that the control of the movement of all those forces should be under a centralized body. They were so today through the Commander-in-Chief under the control of the Chiefs of Staffs who got their directions from the War Cabinet.

"It would be dishonest to say that an Indian Defence Member would be responsible for the defence of India," added Sir Stafford.

He referred to the decision to appoint an Indian member to the War Cabinet and said it was in that Cabinet that decisions as to strategy were made. He suggested that the full membership of the War Cabinet was the important thing, and not the mere appointment of a Defence Member.

His attention was drawn to the position in Australia. "The position in Australia today," he said, "is that the whole thing is under American control." (Laughter.)

In the course of further answers, Sir Stafford revealed that the draft declaration which was published today was not the identical document with which he had come to India. He had made certain changes, he said, after coming to India. Asked whether the draft was final, he replied amidst laughter: "It is final for today."

In reply to a question whether he, as a Socialist, was satisfied with the proposals, Sir Stafford declared: "With all the views that I have, I am satisfied that this offers the maximum chance of the greatest unity in India."

With reference to treaties with the States, Sir Stafford reiterated, "The British Government will stick to its treaties," but he envisaged that those relating to economic matters might have to be adjusted.

When one Pressman pointed out that in the Constituent Assembly there would be no representation for the Centrally administered areas like Delhi, Sir Stafford admitted that this was a matter of detail which would have to be considered.

Sir Stafford indicated that as soon as the constitution was settled everything would be transferred to India. If some provinces decided not to accede, then so far as they were concerned they would not be parties to the constitution.

"If, for a year, in a constitution-making body, the Indian communities meet together in order to forge a united constitution for India, they will probably succeed," said Sir Stafford. "If they do not, we can do nothing more to help them to succeed. If after having done that they want to separate, nobody in the world can stop them."

The object, he added, was to offer a method by which there could be a United India, governed by Indians, and we were not going any longer to take up an attitude which would justify the charge that it was the British Government which was preventing a United India, because they were relying upon differences between Indians. "Unfortunately, our experience in the past ten years has been that the Indians have not yet solved the problem or put forward a joint scheme for the giving of self-government to India."

He made it clear that in case there were non-acceding provinces which were not financially self-supporting the British Government would not undertake financing them. They would have to decide before they decided not to accede whether, when they did not accede, they could support themselves financially.

Did the scheme mean that Pakistan had been conceded? asked a correspondent.

Certainly not, replied Sir Stafford.

Would the Indian Union have the right to take expropriatory measures? asked another correspondent.

The Indian Union would be free to take all measures open to a sovereign State to take.

#### APPENDIX IV

#### FAREWELL BROADCAST

*The following is the text of Sir Stafford Cripps's farewell broadcast from the Delhi Station of All India Radio on April 11, 1942:*

You will have heard that the draft declaration which I brought to India on behalf of the War Cabinet and which I explained to you last time I spoke over the wireless has been rejected by your leaders.

I am sad that this great opportunity of rallying India for her defence and her freedom has been missed.

None could have been more fully conscious than I of the great difficulties which history has placed in the way of a settlement of the relations between British and Indian peoples and even more between the different communities in India.

The War Cabinet in sending me upon this mission realized to the full that Indian opinion—though united in the desire for full self-government—was widely disunited as to the methods by which it should be attained.

It was with these wide differences of view that we had to deal, and it would have been of no use if we had closed our eyes to the hard realities of the situation.

In the past, British Government have been accused of using vague terms to cloak a lack of purpose; and when they have stated

that it must be left to the Indian communities to agree amongst themselves, it has been said that this was only a device by which Great Britain might indefinitely retain its control over India.

But Congress has, since the outbreak of war, repeatedly demanded two essentials as the basis for its support of the Allied effort in the war. First, a declaration of Indian independence and, second, a Constituent Assembly to frame a new and free constitution for India. Both these demands find their place in the draft declaration.

It was in the light of the demands and criticism of the Indian leaders that the War Cabinet drafted their declaration with the object of convincing the Indian peoples and world public opinion of the sincerity of their desire to offer freedom to India at the earliest practicable moment.

To avoid the complaints that had been made in the past, they put out a clear and precise plan which would avoid all possibility of Indian self-government being held up by the views of some large section or community, but they left it open for the Indian leaders to agree upon an alternative method, if they wished.

Of course, every individual and organization would have liked the draft declaration to express his or their point of view, forgetting that if it did, it would inevitably have been rejected by others.

The War Cabinet were thus in a position rather like that of an arbitrator who tries to arrange a fair compromise between conflicting points of view. They could not, however, without denying the very freedom which they were offering, impose a form of government upon the Indian peoples which they did not themselves freely choose.

Criticism has been showered on the scheme from all sides; parties and individuals have vied with one another in a competition to discover the greatest number of defects. But in all this spate of criticism, those vital parts of the document with which all agree have never been mentioned. Full and free self-government for India, that is its central feature.

This critical and unconstructive attitude, natural enough in the law courts or in the market-place, is not the best way of arriving at a compromise, but compromise there must be if a strong and free India is to come into being.

Some day, somehow, the great communities and parties of India will have to agree upon the method of framing their new constitution. I regret profoundly for the sake of India, for whom I have a deep and admiring friendship, that the opportunity now offered has not been accepted.

But all this concerns the future. The immediate difficulties have been as regards the present. First there was the difficulty as to defence.

Upon that the attitude of the British Government was very simple. For many decades, the defence of India has been in the charge of His Majesty's Government. That charge has been carried out for over 20 years by a Commander-in-Chief who was also Defence Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. This has led to an organization which places the control of the armed forces under a Defence Secretariat headed by the Commander-in-Chief. The Army in India—containing British and Indian units—the Navy and the Air Force all come under this Supreme Command.

The demand has been made that the defence of India should be placed in Indian hands. No one suggests that the Commander-in-Chief, as the head of the armed forces, should be under the Indian Government, but they say his functions as Defence Member should be transferred to an Indian.

This may sound simple, but would mean a long and difficult reorganization of the whole Defence Secretariat—an unscrambling of eggs scrambled many years ago—which would cause delay and confusion at the very moment when the enemy is at the gates and the maximum of speed and efficiency is essential in defence.

The duty of the British Government to defend India and our duty to our American allies who are giving such valuable help make such a course impossible.

To show our complete sincerity of desire to give to representative Indian members of the Executive the maximum of power, we offered to create a new War Department which would take over the Governmental relation of the Commander-in-Chief's General Headquarters and the Naval and Air Headquarters and which would be in his charge as War Member, leaving the rest of the Defence Department—with a number of most important functions added—to an Indian Defence Member.

This arrangement satisfied some of the parties but not Congress, who demanded a degree of control in the Indian Defence Member which might have gravely jeopardized the Allied war effort in India.

In the wider area of Defence, which touches almost every Department of the Government of India, the administration would have been wholly under the control of representative Indians.

But none of these things were the real cause of the breakdown of the negotiations.

In their final letter addressed to me, the Congress Working Committee have stated that the temporary form of government envisaged during the war, is not such as to enable them to join the Government. They have two suggestions to remedy the situation. First, an immediate change of the constitution, a point raised at the last moment, and one that everyone else has admitted to be wholly impracticable while the war is proceeding; and second, that they are prepared to enter a true National Government with a Cabinet of Indian leaders untrammelled by any control by the Viceroy or the British Government. Realize what this means. The Government of India for an indefinite period by a set of persons nominated by the Indian parties, responsible to no legislature or electorate, incapable of being changed and the majority of whom would be in a position to dominate large minorities.

It is easy to understand that the great minorities in India would never accept such a system. Nor could His Majesty's Government, who have given pledges to those minorities, consent to their being placed unprotected while the existing constitution lasts, under a simple and possibly inimical majority rule. It would be a breach of all the pledges that we have given. Such a solution may sound simple and attractive to those who have no knowledge of the deep communal divisions in India, but it is in fact wholly impracticable and would never be accepted by very large sections of the Indian peoples.

The Congress have suggested that without these changes they

cannot give a lead to the Indian people. The essential need in India today is for all the leaders of all the main parties and communities to come together in a single National Government. A scheme that attracts some and repels others, such as Congress has suggested, is of little value.

Nor does the precise form matter so greatly. Inspiration and leadership are not to be found in forms or conventions; they will be demonstrated by combined purpose and unity of action.

No constitution and no convention will work unless those who lead the people will come together with a common determination to make it work. Had Congress leaders felt themselves able to join with the other leaders who were willing, then indeed a great work might have been accomplished.

One thing I must make clear. I alone in India carry the responsibility for what has been done, neither the Viceroy nor the Commander-in-Chief carries any responsibility for these negotiations. They have throughout done their utmost to help me and I express to them and many other willing helpers of all nationalities my most sincere thanks for the help. We have tried by the offer that I brought to help India along her road to victory and to freedom. But, for the moment, past distrust has proved too strong to allow of present agreement. But in that failure to achieve immediate results there is no bitterness. Our effort has been genuine. No responsible Indian has questioned the sincerity of our main purpose—the complete freedom of India. Such an effort, inspired by goodwill and sincerity, will leave its mark upon the history of our relations, and will cast its beneficent light forward into the future. It will prove to have been a first step along the path of freedom for India and of friendship between our two countries. We may differ as to the methods by which that freedom can best be reached both now and in the future, but upon one thing we must all be agreed, that it cannot be reached through a fresh conquest of India by a power such as Japan that has shown itself brutal and intolerant to its own Asiatic sister nations.

It is only necessary to visit Formosa or the occupied parts of China—as I have done—to know that through a Japanese conquest, death, misery, and starvation will come. The widely advertised propaganda of the Japanese, painting themselves as the liberators of China, has resulted in nothing but untold suffering and tragedy for hundreds of thousands of honest and peaceful Chinese men, women and children. The same propaganda now being made to trick the Indian people into submission holds out for them no better prospect than the dire sufferings which have been inflicted upon their Chinese neighbours. The basic philosophy of the Japanese Fascists, as of their German counterparts, is that they, as a superior race, have the right to enslave all whom they can conquer. I have seen and heard of the exploits of the Nazis in Russia, in Poland, in Yugoslavia and in other Slav countries of Europe, and I know that none but the most diseased imagination could ever conjure up the ghastly and sadistic horrors which these barbarians have made a reality throughout every town and village in that vast area.

That human bestiality could sink so low as in the case of the Nazi hordes in Eastern Europe, and of their Japanese allies in China and other places, is an overwhelming tragedy for the world, and it is a tragedy that we and you and all the Allied Nations are determined to expunge from the pages of history, in the only way that we can by the decisive defeat of those responsible for this brutalization of humanity. No peoples with the culture of the



Indians—a culture as old, as deep and as real as that of their Chinese neighbours—could ever stand by and tolerate these insults to their moral standards and to their common humanity. Whatever our past differences may have been, however great the political difficulties of solving our present problems may be, we can and must stand together to fight upon your fair Indian soil for the decencies of humanity and for the right to clean, honest and unbrutalized lives.

Our philosophies, our religions and our traditions differ widely, but in whatever form we may each worship our own conception of supreme power and absolute goodness, we, one and all, desire to see those ethical and moral standards which are implicit in our religion become the touchstone of our behaviour in all the wide and human contacts which make up our day-to-day life.

And in this epic struggle for decent moral standards in the world we fight against the godless barbarism and bestiality of our enemies, but we do not fight alone. Russia, China, the United States of America, and all the Allied nations with their suffering peoples, stand beside us, a great company of gallant men and women who will give their all for those things which they know to be right and just. On the battlefields of Russia and China, in their cities and on their farms, millions of our fellow men and women have already given their lives that we might live.

To that great and gallant army of the heroic dead, we not only owe a debt of gratitude, but we acknowledge a duty and an obligation.

To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield. To strive, to seek, to find that righteous victory which they died to win, and not to yield to that barbarous aggression against which they made their bodies a living wall of resistance.

It is true that millions have died in those countries, as others have died in the crowded streets of our English cities, in our ships upon the high seas and fighting in our armies on the land and in the air; but as each has fallen others have crowded forward to take the vacant place and countless millions are even now preparing to strengthen and reinforce the effort, to make victory sure.

The hour has struck when India herself is being driven inexorably by the aggression of Japan into the front line of defence in a war which now spreads its evil tentacles into nearly every country in the world.

India takes her place, and takes it proudly, beside the peoples of Russia, China and America as yet another vast continental area attacked by an unscrupulous and self-seeking foe.

We shall do our utmost, despite all our heavy commitments elsewhere, and the United States of America will lend her great and growing aid as well, to assist the Indians in the defence of their country. We ask them to help us as we seek to help them. Together we can do much, divided we can do far less.

Hard and difficult times surely lie ahead, the path of honour and of duty has never been an easy one, and today in those who would follow it to its end there must be found a greater courage and determination than ever before; but the end is certain as the slow wheels of justice grind out defeat for the aggressor nations.

The vast resources of manufacture of the United States, of Great Britain and of Russia, matched to the unlimited manpower of the

Allied nations, can bring but one result—the final victory, even though it be delayed, and towards that victory India can and must play her part, a part that will give her the proud right to full and free representation in the council of the nations when they meet to make the final peace which can, if we will it, lead the peoples of the world into a brighter and happier future of organized and co-operative freedom.

As during all wars the tempo of historical development must be accelerated, so during this the greatest of all wars the speed of advance and the pressure of events will be greater than ever before. The common peoples of the world will have opportunities in the world resettlement such as they have never had before, and the Indian peoples and their leaders must make ready to play their full part in the building of the new world order.

Let us then put aside the discussions of the last month and let them take their ordered place in history, while we turn all our energies to the defence of India, the first step to building a new and free future for the Indian peoples.

This is the time when the youth of the world are called upon to make every sacrifice, to the ultimate sacrifice of life itself, but through that selfless service to humanity, they earn the right to take their full share in the shaping of the future. That future must inevitably be influenced by what is done during these anxious days and months of war. Though old heads may be wiser, old hearts cannot have the fire and courage of youth—it is that fire and courage which we must summon to the defence of India and to the building of her freedom when victory is won.

Risks must be taken, innovations must be tried, and we must climb quickly out of the ruts of peace-time habits and customs. A new tempo is needed, a new devotion, a more total effort to finish quickly with the horrors of war and reach that new and constructive era of our world civilization, upon which we all must concentrate our every energy, once the war is won.

I have seen that effort being made in the Soviet Union, the whole-hearted devotion of an entire continent—more varied in racial origin than India itself—and the world has learnt what a great and courageous people inspired with the love of their country and of their freedom can achieve. I have witnessed too the Chinese—ill-equipped, lacking many essential supplies—indomitably carrying on their defence year after year and wearing down the aggressor who has penetrated deep into their homeland. The cities and towns of England have been deeply scarred and her people have suffered as none ever before from the concentrated hate of enemy bombing. Their courage and their fortitude have thrilled the world.

Now is the time for India and her people to join their courage, their strength and their endurance in this great heroic and worldwide army of the common people, and to take her part in those smashing blows for victory against brutality and aggression which shall for ever free the masses from the age-long fear and tragedy of poverty and of war.

## APPENDIX V

### RESOLUTION OF THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE

*This resolution was communicated to Sir Stafford Cripps on April 2, but was released to the press only on April 10, after the talks had failed:*

The Working Committee have given their full and earnest consideration to the proposals made by the British War Cabinet in

regard to India and the elucidation thereof by Sir Stafford Cripps. These proposals, which have been made at the very last hour because of the compulsion of events, have to be considered not only in relation to India's demand for independence, but more especially in the present grave war crisis, with a view to meeting effectively the perils and dangers that confront India and envelop the world.

The Congress has repeatedly stated, ever since the commencement of the war in September, 1939, that the people of India would line themselves with the progressive forces of the world and assume full responsibility to face the new problems and shoulder the new burdens that had arisen, and it asked for the necessary conditions to enable them to do so to be created. An essential condition was the freedom of India, for only the realization of present freedom could light the flame which would illumine millions of hearts and move them to action. At the last meeting of the All-India Congress Committee, after the commencement of the war in the Pacific, it was stated that "only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis and be of help in the furtherance of the larger causes that are emerging from the storm of war."

The British War Cabinet's new proposals relate principally to the future upon the cessation of hostilities. The Committee, while recognizing that self-determination for the people of India is accepted in principle in that uncertain future, regret that this is fettered and circumscribed and certain provisions have been introduced which gravely imperil the development of a free and united nation and the establishment of a democratic State. Even the constitution-making body is so constituted that the people's right to self-determination is vitiated by the introduction of non-representative elements. The people of India have as a whole clearly demanded full independence and the Congress has repeatedly declared that no other status except that of independence for the whole of India could be agreed to or could meet the essential requirements of the present situation. The Committee recognize that future independence may be implicit in the proposals, but the accompanying provisions and restrictions are such that real freedom may well become an illusion. The complete ignoring of the ninety millions of the people of the Indian States and their treatment as commodities at the disposal of their rulers is a negation of both democracy and self-determination. While the representation of an Indian State in the constitution-making body is fixed on a population basis, the people of the State have no voice in choosing those representatives, nor are they to be consulted at any stage, while decisions vitally affecting them are being taken. Such States may in many ways become barriers to the growth of Indian freedom, enclaves where foreign authority still prevails and where the possibility of maintaining foreign armed forces has been stated to be a likely contingency, and a perpetual menace to the freedom of the people of the States as well as of the rest of India.

The acceptance beforehand of the novel principle of non-accession for a province is also a severe blow to the conception of Indian unity and an apple of discord likely to generate growing trouble in the provinces, and which may well lead to further difficulties in the way of the Indian States merging themselves in the Indian Union. The Congress has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity and any break in that unity, especially in the modern world when people's minds inevitably think in terms of ever larger federations, would be injurious to all concerned and exceedingly painful to contemplate. Nevertheless the Committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian

Union against their declared and established will. While recognizing this principle, the Committee feel that every effort should be made to create conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and co-operative national life. The acceptance of the principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which result in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercised on other substantial groups within that area. Each territorial unit should have the fullest possible autonomy within the Union, consistently with a strong national State. The proposal now made on the part of the British War Cabinet encourages and will lead to attempts at separation at the very inception of a union and thus create friction just when the utmost co-operation and goodwill are most needed. This proposal has been presumably made to meet a communal demand, but it will have other consequences also and lead politically reactionary and obscurantist groups among different communities to create trouble and divert public attention from the vital issues before the country.

Any proposal concerning the future of India must demand attention and scrutiny, but in today's grave crisis, it is the present that counts, and even proposals for the future are important in so far as they affect the present. The Committee have necessarily attached the greatest importance to this aspect of the question, and on this ultimately depends what advice they should give to those who look to them for guidance. For this present the British War Cabinet's proposals are vague and altogether incomplete, and it would appear that no vital changes in the present structure are contemplated. It has been made clear that the Defence of India will in any event remain under British control. At any time defence is a vital subject; during wartime it is all important and covers almost every sphere of life and administration. To take away defence from the sphere of responsibility at this stage is to reduce that responsibility to a farce and a nullity, and to make it perfectly clear that India is not going to be free in any way and her Government is not going to function as a free and independent government during the pendency of the war. The Committee would repeat that an essential and fundamental prerequisite for the assumption of responsibility by the Indian people in the present, is their realization as a fact that they are free and are in charge of maintaining and defending their freedom. What is most wanted is the enthusiastic response of the people, which cannot be evoked without the fullest trust in them and the devolution of responsibility on them in the matter of defence. It is only thus that even at this grave eleventh hour it may be possible to galvanize the people of India to rise to the height of the occasion. It is manifest that the present Government of India, as well as its provincial agencies, are lacking in competence, and are incapable of shouldering the burden of India's defence. It is only the people of India, through their popular representatives, who may shoulder this burden worthily. But that can only be done by present freedom, and full responsibility being cast upon them.

The Committee, therefore, are unable to accept the proposals put forward on behalf of the British War Cabinet.

#### APPENDIX VI CONGRESS-CRIPPS CORRESPONDENCE

*Full text of the correspondence that passed between the Congress President and Sir Stafford Cripps in connection with the British Government's Draft Declaration:*

New Delhi, March 30, 1942

My dear Maulana Sahib

I had the opportunity of a short talk with H.E. the Viceroy last

night, during which he discussed with me his views as to the implementation of clause (e) of the draft declaration.

It must be clearly understood that the final definition of the division of responsibilities between His Majesty's Government and the Government of India is as stated in paragraph (e) of the document. I propose to make the position as to this as clear as I can in my broadcast tonight.

The Viceroy would be prepared to consult with Indian leaders on this basis to see whether it were possible to designate an Indian to some office connected with the Government of India's defence responsibilities without in any way impinging upon the functions and duties of the Commander-in-Chief either in his capacity as supreme commander of the armed forces in India or as the member of the Executive Council in charge of Defence.

I give you this information as you put the question to me when last I had the pleasure of seeing you.

Yours sincerely

(Sd.) R. Stafford Cripps

3, Queen Victoria Road

New Delhi, March 31, 1942

My dear Maulana Sahib

Thank you for your letter of today. The reply which I gave at my Press conference, and to which Mr. Morarjee refers in the telegram you have sent me, was, I assure you, not intended to convey any lack of appreciation of the importance of Indian commercial interests. I was dealing with the position in regard to European commercial interests if the proposals which I have been discussing with you and the other leaders are given effect, and I said that I had seen representatives of the European community because the interests of that community might be affected. After all, the Europeans are a minority element in India who are entitled to be heard in such discussions as at present, not only in regard to their business interests but on other matters. Indian business interests will presumably be able to make their voice heard in the constitution-making body through those members of the Provincial legislatures who represent their interests, and then would be the time and place at which their interests would have to receive consideration. It does not seem to me that it would really be helpful to the discussions I have come here to hold to see Mr. Morarjee although I would have been happy to do so if I had been able to stay here longer than I can on this occasion.

I am exceedingly sorry that my letter of yesterday should have been delayed in reaching you. My Secretary took it to Birla House in the belief that the Working Committee was meeting there and understood that it would be immediately communicated to you.

Yours sincerely

(Sd.) R. Stafford Cripps

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

Birla House

3, Queen Victoria Road

New Delhi, April 1, 1942

Dear Maulana Sahib

I understand from the Hindu Press that difficulties are still in the mind of Congress as to the question of the responsibility for the Defence of India.

I have done what I could to clarify this point but as I think it would be a tragedy if negotiations were to break down upon any misunderstanding of the position I should like to suggest that I should ask the Commander-in-Chief to meet yourself and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with myself in order that he may explain fully to you the technical difficulties of the situation and in order that you may make to him any suggestions you wish as to the division of responsibilities in this sphere of government. Unfortunately he is at the moment away at Calcutta but he is expected back on Saturday next at the latest (and possibly earlier). If you consider this a helpful suggestion—as I hope you will—I will ask him the moment he returns whether he will be prepared to attend such a meeting and I do not anticipate that there will be any difficulty about it.

I am sure you will realize that I do not want to be met with an impasse if there is any reasonable way out.

Yours sincerely  
(Sd.) R. Stafford Cripps

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad  
Kucha Chelan  
Delhi

New Delhi, April 1, 1942

My dear Sir Stafford

I have your letter of today's date, for which I thank you.

If you so desire it, I shall gladly meet the Commander-in-Chief and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will, I hope, be able to accompany me.

My Committee have already arrived at a decision in regard to the proposals communicated by you to us. It was my intention to send this to you this evening, or possibly to take it over in person, in case you wished to discuss any point contained in it. This decision naturally covers other points also apart from Defence. I hope to send it to you some time today. If you wish to meet me again in regard to this I shall gladly meet you.

In your letter you refer to the "Hindu Press." I do not know what exactly you mean by this.

Yours sincerely  
(Sd.) Abul Kalam Azad

The Rt. Hon. Sir Stafford Cripps, K.C., M.P.  
3, Queen Victoria Road  
New Delhi

3, Queen Victoria Road  
New Delhi, April 1, 1942

My dear Maulana Sahib

Thank you very much for your letter.

I will make the arrangement for the meeting with the Commander-in-Chief the moment he returns.

As to the document you are sending over, I understand this expresses the views of the Congress Working Committee upon the proposals, but that it is not intended to be a definite and final statement as to the Congress attitude, in view of our meeting again.

I should be most grateful if you could come over and see me with regard to it tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

I apologize for the reference to the "Hindu Press." I was referring to the "Hindustan Times" amongst other papers.

Yours sincerely  
(Sd.) R. Stafford Cripps

New Delhi, April 2, 1942

My dear Maulana Sahib

Mr. Jinnah has asked me to give him a clear picture of the method by which I have proposed that a Province should decide whether it will or will not join an Indian Union set up in accordance with the procedure laid down in His Majesty's Government draft declaration. I have told him in reply that the proposition which I have put orally to him and to the other leaders is that a Province should reach its decision by a vote in the Legislative Assembly on a resolution that the Province should join the Indian Union, and that if the majority for accession is less than 60%, the minority would have the right to demand a plebiscite of the adult male population.

I explained this to you at our first meeting, but as I have written to Mr. Jinnah in this sense, I thought it desirable to give you a similar letter.

Yours sincerely

(Sd.) R. Stafford Cripps

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad  
Kucha Chelan  
New Delhi

New Delhi April 3, 1942

Dear Maulana Sahib

I have now been able to see His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and he will be very glad to meet you and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to discuss the position regarding Defence. Subject to your convenience, 6 o'clock tomorrow evening would suit General Wavell, and if you can manage this, I suggest that you should come here at 10 minutes to 6 p.m., and I will go up with you to the Commander-in-Chief's Office.

If there are any specific points of detail about organization which you wish to raise, I should be very much obliged if you could let me have a note of them tonight or first thing tomorrow morning so that the Commander-in-Chief can consider them before the meeting.

Yours sincerely

(Sd.) R. Stafford Cripps  
3, Queen Victoria Road  
New Delhi, April 7, 1942

My dear Maulana Sahib

I have, as I promised when I last saw you, consulted His Majesty's Government as to what further step could be taken in order to meet the criticism of your Working Committee that under clause (e) of the draft declaration the defence of India would not fall to be administered by a representative Indian. Although, as the Working Committee have fully understood, it is impossible to make any change in the existing constitution during the period of hostilities, His Majesty's Government are anxious to give representative Indians the maximum possible participation in the Government during that period, in accordance with the principle laid down in clause (e) of the draft declaration.

I have explained to you the technical difficulties with regard to the position of the Commander-in-Chief and will not here reiterate them.

I have also pointed out that all those main aspects of the defence of India which at present fall under the care of other members of the Executive (e.g., Civil Defence, Supply, Home Affairs, Communications, etc., etc.) will, if the scheme is accepted, be administered by representative members in the new National Government.

His Majesty's Government are however anxious to do their utmost to meet the wishes of the Indian people, and to demonstrate their complete trust in the co-operative effort of the two peoples, British and Indian, which they hope may reinforce the Defence of India.

They also appreciate the force of the arguments that have been put forward as to the necessities of an effective appeal to the Indian peoples for their own defence.

I am therefore authorized to propose to you as a way out of the present difficulties that,

(a) The Commander-in-Chief should retain a seat in the Viceroy's Executive Council as "War Member" and should retain his full control over all the war activities of the armed forces in India subject to the control of His Majesty's Government and the War Cabinet upon which body a representative Indian should sit with equal powers in all matters relating to the Defence of India. Membership of the Pacific Council would likewise be offered to a representative Indian.

(b) An Indian representative member would be added to the Viceroy's Executive, who would take over those sections of the Department of Defence which can organizationally be separated immediately from the Commander-in-Chief's War Department and which are specified under head (i) of the annexure. In addition this member would take over the Defence Co-ordination Department which is at present directly under the Viceroy, and certain other important functions of the Government of India which are directly related to Defence and which do not fall under any of the other existing departments and which are specified under head (ii) of the annexure.

His Majesty's Government very much hope, as I personally hope, that this arrangement will enable the Congress to come into the scheme so that if other important bodies of Indian opinion are also willing it will be possible for His Excellency the Viceroy to embark forthwith upon the task of forming the new National Government in consultation with the leaders of the Indian opinion.

Yours sincerely

(Sd.) R. Stafford Cripps

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad  
Kucha Chelan  
New Delhi.

#### ANNEXURE

(i) Matters now dealt with in the Defence Department which would be transferred to a Defence Co-ordination Department.

- (a) Public relations.
- (b) Demobilization and post-war reconstruction.
- (c) Petroleum Officer, whose functions are to calculate the requirements of, and make provision for, all the petroleum products required for the Army, Navy and Air Force, and for the Civil Departments including storage and distribution.
- (d) Indian representation on the Eastern Group Supply Council.
- (e) Amenities for, and welfare of, troops and their dependants, including Indian soldiers abroad.
- (f) All canteen organizations.
- (g) Certain non-technical educational institutions, e.g. Lawrence schools, K.G.R.I.M. schools and the Prince of Wales' Royal Indian Military College.



(h) Stationery, Printing and forms for the Army.

(i) Reception, accommodation and social arrangements for all foreign missions, representatives and officers.

(ii) In addition the Defence Co-ordination Department would take over many major questions bearing directly on defence, but difficult to locate in any particular existing departments. Examples are:

"Denial" policy;

Policy of evacuation from threatened areas;

Signals co-ordination;

Economic warfare.

*The formula for defence suggested in the above letter was considered by the Working Committee and rejected. After the rejection of the above formula a second formula for Defence, the Johnson Formula, was placed before the Working Committee. There was no list of subjects or functions attached to this.*

#### JOHNSON FORMULA FOR DEFENCE

In amplification of clause (e) of the draft declaration His Majesty's Government make the following proposition upon the subject-matter of the Defence of India.

(a) The Defence Department shall be placed in charge of a representative Indian member with the exception of functions to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief as war member of the Executive Council.

(b) A war department will be constituted which will take over such functions of the Defence Department as are not retained by the Defence Member. A list of all the retained functions has been agreed, to which will be added further important responsibilities including the matters now dealt with by the Defence Co-ordination Department and other vital matters related to the defence of India.

*[The Working Committee having considered the above formula varied it as follows:]*

#### WORKING COMMITTEE FORMULA

(a) The Defence Department shall be placed in the charge of a representative Indian member, but certain functions relating to the conduct of the war will be exercised, for the duration of war, by the Commander-in-Chief, who will be in control of the war activities of the armed forces in India, and who will be an extraordinary member of the National Cabinet for that purpose.

(b) A War Department will be constituted under the Commander-in-Chief. This Department will take over such functions as are exercised by the Commander-in-Chief. A list of such functions has been prepared and is attached.

(c) The Defence Member shall be in charge of all other matters relating to Defence, including those now dealt with by the Defence Co-ordination Department.

*[This formula was sent with a covering letter, dated April 8, which stated, inter alia:]*

The new proposals made by Sir Stafford Cripps on behalf of the British War Cabinet were entirely unsatisfactory. Both the approach and the allocation of subjects were, in our opinion, wrong, and there was no real transfer of responsibility for Defence to representative Indians in the National Government. Such transfer is essential for the successful defence of the country, for on it depends the full mobilization of the war-potential of the country.

The approach made in the draft you gave me this morning seems to us a more healthy one. With some alterations that we suggest, it might be made the basis of further discussions. But, it must be remembered, that a very great deal depends on the allocation of subjects between the Defence Department and the War Department, and until this is done, it is not possible to give a final opinion.

Leaving aside this subject of allocation for the present, we would suggest that the formula which is to form the basis of discussion should be as follows: The formula is given above.

You will notice that this does not differ materially from your formula. The general approach is that the National Government is responsible for the entire government of the country including its defence. But, in view of the war and the obvious necessity of allowing full scope for war operations to the Commander-in-Chief, functions relating to the conduct of the war are delegated to him and are to be exercised by him for the duration of the war. He will in effect have full control of these operations and of the war activities of the armed forces in India.

It is presumed of course that there will be full co-operation between the Defence Department and the War Department. The National Government will inevitably strain every nerve towards the successful defence of the country and will give all possible help to the Commander-in-Chief in this behalf.

Sir Stafford Cripps has already stated that a representative Indian will be a member of the War Cabinet in London, and that membership of the Pacific Council would likewise be offered to a representative Indian.

There are many other important matters which have to be considered, but I do not wish to trouble you with them at this stage. I should like to refer to them, however, in order to prevent any misapprehension later on. In the draft declaration proposed to be made by the British Government there is much with which we do not agree. The preamble commits us to Dominion Status, though there is a possibility of our voting ourselves out later on. Clauses C and D relate, *inter alia*, to the right of a province not to join the Union and to the nomination by the Rulers of States' representatives to the constitution-making body. We think these provisions are bad and likely to have dangerous consequences. We have indicated our views in regard to them in the resolution a copy of which I have already sent you. All these provisions are for the future and they need not come in the way of a present arrangement. As controversial matter, this might be left out of any proposed declaration at this stage. It will be open to any group or party to adhere to its own opinions in regard to them and yet co-operate in a settlement for present action. We hope that it may be possible for us to arrive at a satisfactory settlement about them at a future date.

One other matter to which we attach importance might be mentioned, though it does not arise out of the present talks. We presume that the independent status of India will be recognized by the United Nations. Whenever this is done, it will greatly help our common cause and strengthen our bonds with each other.

#### SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS' FORMULA

*Sir Stafford Cripps amended as follows the Working Committee's formula given above.*

(a) The Defence Department shall be placed in the charge of a representative Indian member, but certain functions relating to the conduct of the war will be exercised, until the new constitution comes into operation, by the Commander-in-Chief, who will be in

control of the war activities of the armed forces in India, and who will be a member of the Executive Council for that purpose.

(b) A War Department will be constituted under the Commander-in-Chief. This Department will take over such functions as are to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief. A list of such functions has been prepared and is attached.

(c) The Defence Member shall be in charge of all other matters relating to Defence in the Defence Department and those now dealt with by the Defence Co-ordination Department in addition to other important matters closely related to Defence.

(d) In the event of any new functions falling to be discharged in relation to Defence or any dispute arising as to the allocation of any old functions it shall be decided by His Majesty's Government.

The War Department, for which the Commander-in-Chief will be Member, will be responsible for the governmental relations of G.H.Q. N.H.Q. and A.H.Q., which include:-

(1) Examining and sanctioning all proposals emanating from G.H.Q., and A.H.Q.,

(2) Representing the policy of Government on all questions connected with the war which originate in or concern G.H.Q., N.H.Q., or A.H.Q.

(3) Acting as the channel of communication between the Government of India and H.M.G. on all such questions.

(4) Acting as liaison between these headquarters and the other Departments of Government, and Provincial Governments.

Birla Park  
New Delhi, April 10, 1942

Dear Sir Stafford

On the 2nd April I sent you the resolution of the Working Committee of the Congress containing their views on the tentative proposals put forward by you on behalf of the British Government. In this resolution we expressed our dissent from several important and far-reaching proposals for the future. Further consideration of these proposals has only strengthened us in our conviction in regard to them, and we should like to repeat that we cannot accept them as suggested. The Working Committee's resolution gives expression to our conclusions relating to them which we reached after the most earnest consideration.

That resolution, however, emphasized the gravity of the present situation and stated that the ultimate decision that we might take would be governed by the changes made in the present. The overriding problem before all of us, and more especially before all Indians, is the defence of the country from aggression and invasion. The future, important as it is, will depend on what happens in the next few months and years. We were, therefore, prepared to do without any assurances for this uncertain future, hoping that through our sacrifices in the defence of our country we would lay the solid and enduring foundations for a free and independent India. We concentrated, therefore, on the present.

Your original proposals in regard to the present, as contained in clause (e) of the proposed declaration, were vague and incomplete, except in so far as it was made clear that "His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the full responsibility for the defence of India." These proposals, in effect, asked for participation in the tasks of today with a view to ensure "the future freedom of India." Freedom was for an uncertain future, not for the present; and no indication was given in clause (e) of what arrangements or governmental and other changes would be made in the present. When this vague-

ness was pointed out, you said that this was deliberate, so as to give you freedom to determine these changes in consultation with others. In our talks you gave us to understand that you envisaged a National Government which would deal with all matters except Defence.

Defence at any time, and more particularly in wartime, is of essential importance and without it a National Government functions in a very limited field. Apart from this consideration, it was obvious that the whole purpose of your proposals and our talks centred round the urgency of the problems created by the threat of the invasion of India. The chief functions of a National Government must necessarily be to organize Defence both intensely and on the widest popular basis and to create a mass psychology of resistance to an invader. Only a National Government could do that, and only a government on whom this responsibility was laid. Popular resistance must have a national background, and both the soldier and the civilian must feel that they are fighting for their country's freedom under national leadership.

We pointed this out to you. The question became one not of just satisfying our national aspirations but of effective prosecution of the war and fighting to the last any invader who set foot on the soil of India. On general principles a National Government would control defence through a Defence Minister, and the Commander-in-Chief would control the armed forces and would have full latitude in the carrying out of operations connected with the war. An Indian National Government should have normally functioned in this way.

We made it clear that the Commander-in-Chief in India would have control of the armed forces and the conduct of operations and other matters connected therewith. With a view to arriving at a settlement, we were prepared to accept certain limitations on the normal powers of the Defence Minister. We had no desire to upset in the middle of the war the present military organization or arrangements. We accepted also that the higher strategy of the war should be controlled by the War Cabinet in London which would have an Indian member. The immediate object before us was to make the defence of India more effective, to strengthen it, to broadbase it on the popular will, and to reduce all red tape, delay and inefficiency from it. There was no question of our interfering with the technical and operational sides. One thing, of course, was of paramount importance to us: India's safety and defence. Subject to this primary consideration, there was no reason why there should be any difficulty in finding a way out of the present impasse in accordance with the unanimous desire of the Indian people, for in this matter there are no differences amongst us.

The emphasis on Defence led you to reconsider the matter and you wrote to me on the 7th April suggesting a formula for Defence.

In this letter you said: "As the Working Committee have understood, it is impossible to make any change in the existing constitution during the period of hostilities." The Working Committee's attitude in the matter has been completely misunderstood and I should like to clear this up, although we are not immediately concerned with it. The Committee do not think that there is any inherent difficulty in the way of constitutional changes during the war. Everything that helps in the war not only can be but must be done, and done with speed. That is the only way to carry on and win a war. No complicated enactments are necessary. A recognition of India's freedom and right to self-determination could easily be made, if it were so wished, together with certain other consequential but important

changes. The rest can be left to future arrangements and adjustments. I might remind you that the British Prime Minister actually proposed a union of France and England on the eve of the fall of France. No greater or more fundamental change could be imagined, and this was suggested at a period of grave crisis and peril. War accelerates change; it does not fit in with static conceptions.

The formula for Defence that you sent us was considered by us together with its annexure which gave a list of subjects or departments which were to be transferred to the Defence Department. This list was a revealing one as it proved that the Defence Minister would deal with relatively unimportant matters. We were unable to accept this and we informed you accordingly.

Subsequently, a new formula for Defence was suggested to us, but without any list of subjects. This formula seemed to us to be based on a more healthy approach and we suggested certain changes pointing out that our ultimate decision would necessarily depend on the allocation of subjects. A revised formula was then sent back to us together with an indication of the functions of the War Department.

This was so widely and comprehensively framed that it was difficult for us to know what the actual allocation of subjects and departments, as between the Defence Department and the War Department, would be. A request was made on our behalf that illustrative lists of these subjects might be supplied to enable us to consider the matter. No such lists were supplied to us.

In the interview we had with you yesterday we discussed the new formula and expressed our viewpoint in regard to it. I need not repeat what I said then. The wording of the formula is after all a minor matter and we would not allow that to come in our way, unless some important principle is at stake. But behind that wording lay certain ideas and we were surprised to find that during the past few days we had been proceeding on wrong assumptions.

When we asked you for illustrative lists of subjects for the two departments, you referred us to the old list for the Defence Department which you had previously sent us and which we had been unable to accept. You added that certain residuary subjects might be added to this but, in effect, there was not likely to be any such subject as the allocation was complete. Thus, you said, that substantially there was no change between the old list and any new one that might be prepared. If this was so, and we were to go back ultimately to the place we started from, then what was the purpose of our searching for new formula? A new set of words meaning the same thing made no difference. In the course of our talks many other matters were also cleared up, unfortunately to our disadvantage. You had referred both privately and in the course of public statements to a National Government and a "Cabinet" consisting of "ministers." These words have a certain significance and we had imagined that the new Government would function with full powers as a Cabinet, with the Viceroy acting as a constitutional head. But the new picture that you placed before us was really not very different from the old, the difference being one of degree and not of kind. The new Government could neither be called except vaguely and inaccurately, nor could it function as a National Government. It would just be the Viceroy and his Executive Council with the Viceroy having all his old powers. We did not ask for any legal changes but we did ask for definite assurances and conventions which would indicate that the new Government would function as a free government the members of which act as members of a cabinet in a constitutional govern-

ment. In regard to the conduct of the war and connected activities the Commander-in-Chief would have freedom, and he would act as war minister.

We were informed that nothing can be said at this stage, even vaguely and generally, about the conventions that should govern the Government and the Viceroy. Ultimately there was always the possibility of the members of the Executive Council resigning or threatening to resign if they disagreed with the Viceroy. That sanction or remedy is of course always open, but it is curious that we should base our approach to a new government on the probability of conflict and resignation at the very outset.

The picture, therefore, placed before us is not essentially different from the old one. The whole object which we, and I believe, you have in view—that is, to create a new psychological approach to the people, to make them feel that their own national government had come, that they were defending their newly won freedom—would be completely frustrated when they saw this old picture again, with even the old labels on. The continuation of the India Office, which has been a symbol of evil to us, would confirm this picture. It has almost been taken for granted for some time past that the India Office would soon disappear as it was an anachronism. But now we are told that even this undesirable relic of a past age is going to continue.

The picture of the government, which was so like the old in all essential features, is such that we cannot fit into it. Normally we would have had little difficulty in disposing of this matter, for it is so far removed from all that we have striven for, but in the circumstances of today we were prepared to give full consideration to every proposal which might lead to an effective organization of the defence of India. The peril that faces India affects us more than it can possibly affect any foreigner, and we are anxious and eager to do our utmost to face it and overcome it. But we cannot undertake responsibilities when we are not given the freedom and power to shoulder them effectively and when an old environment continues which hampers the national effort.

While we cannot accept the proposals you have made, we want to inform you that we are yet prepared to assume responsibility provided a truly national government is formed. We are prepared to put aside for the present all questions about the future, though, as we have indicated, we hold definite views about it. But in the present, the National Government must be a cabinet government with full power and must not merely be a continuation of the Viceroy's Executive Council. In regard to defence we have already stated what, in our opinion, the position should be at present. We feel that such an arrangement is the very minimum that is essential for the functioning of a National Government and for making the popular appeal which is urgently needed.

We would point out to you that the suggestions we have put forward are not ours only but may be considered to be the unanimous demand of the Indian people. On these matters there is no difference of opinion among various groups and parties, and the difference is as between the Indian people as a whole and the British Government. Such differences as exist in India relate to constitutional changes in the future. We are agreeable to the postponement of this issue so that the largest possible measure of unity might be achieved in the present crisis for the defence of India. It would be a tragedy that even when there is this unanimity of opinion in India, the British Government should prevent a free National Government from

functioning and from serving the cause of India as well as the larger causes for which millions are suffering and dying today.

Yours sincerely  
(Sd.) Abul Kalam Azad.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Stafford Cripps,  
3, Queen Victoria Road,  
New Delhi.

3, Queen Victoria Road,  
New Delhi, the 11th April, 1942.

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I was extremely sorry to receive from you your letter of April 10th expressing the rejection by the Congress Working Committee of His Majesty's Government's draft declaration.

I will not deal with those points which are covered by the original resolution of your Committee which you sent me, as they were clearly not the reason for your decision.

Nor need I go into the question of the division of duties between the Defence Minister and the Commander-in-Chief as War Member with which you deal at length. This division allotted to the Defence Minister all functions outside those actually connected with the General Headquarters, Navy Headquarters and Air Headquarters which are under the Commander-in-Chief as head of the fighting forces in India.

In addition to these functions in the narrow field of "Defence" it was suggested that all other portfolios relating to that subject such as:

Home Department—Internal order, police, refugees, etc.

Finance Department—All war finance in India.

Communications Department—Railways, roads, transport, etc.

Supply Department—Supplies for all forces and munitions.

Information and Broadcasting Department—Propaganda, publicity, etc.

Civil Defence Department—A.R.P. and all forms of civilian defence.

Legislative Department—Regulations and orders.

Labour Department—Manpower.

Defence Department—Administration of Indian personnel, etc.

should be put in the hands of representative Indians as members of the Executive Council.

Nothing further could have been done by way of giving responsibility for Defence services to representative Indian members without jeopardizing the immediate defence of India under the Commander-in-Chief. This defence is, as you know, a paramount duty and responsibility of His Majesty's Government, while unity of Command is essential in the interests of the Allied help to India.

The real substance of your refusal to take part in a National Government is that the form of Government suggested is not such as would enable you to rally the Indian people as you desire.

You make two suggestions. First that the constitution might now be changed. In this respect I would point out that you made this suggestion for the first time last night, nearly three weeks after you had received the proposals, and I would further remark that every other representative with whom I have discussed this view has

accepted the practical impossibility of any such legislative change in the middle of a war and at such a moment as the present.

Second you suggest "a truly National Government" be formed, which must be a "cabinet Government with full power."

Without constitutional changes of a most complicated character and on a very large scale this would not be possible, as you realize.

Were such a system to be introduced by convention under the existing circumstances, the nominated cabinet (nominated presumably by the major political organizations) would be responsible to no one but itself, could not be removed and would in fact constitute an absolute dictatorship of the majority.

This suggestion would be rejected by all minorities in India, since it would subject all of them to a permanent and autocratic majority in the Cabinet. Nor would it be consistent with the pledges already given by His Majesty's Government to protect the rights of those minorities.

In a country such as India where communal divisions are still so deep an irresponsible majority Government of this kind is not possible.

Apart from this, however, until such time as the Indian peoples frame their new constitution, His Majesty's Government must continue to carry out its duties to those large sections of the Indian people to whom it has given its pledges.

The proposals of His Majesty's Government went as far as possible short of a complete change in the constitution which is generally acknowledged as impracticable in the circumstances of today.

While, therefore, both I and His Majesty's Government recognize the keen desire of your Working Committee to carry on the war against the enemy by every means in their power, they regret that your Working Committee has not seen its way to join in the war effort upon the conditions sincerely offered, the only conditions which could have brought together all the different communities and sections of the Indian people.

Yours sincerely,  
(Sd.) STAFFORD CRIPPS

I propose to publish this answer,  
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.  
Birla House,  
New Delhi.

Birla House..  
Albuquerque Road,  
New Delhi.  
April 11, 1942.

Dear Sir Stafford,

I have just received your letter of April 10th and I must confess that my colleagues and I were considerably surprised to read it. I am sending you this reply immediately and can only deal briefly here with some of the points you have raised.

The points covered by our original resolution are important and represent my Committee's well-considered views on the British proposals as a whole. But we pointed out to you that so far as the proposals relate to the future they might be set aside, as we were anxious to assume responsibility for India's government and defence



in this hour of danger. This responsibility could only be undertaken, however, if it was real responsibility and power.

As regards the division of functions between the Defence Minister and the War Minister you did not give illustrative lists, as requested by us, and referred us to the previous list of the Defence Minister's functions, which, as you know, we had been wholly unable to accept. In your letter under reply you mention certain subjects, directly or indirectly related to the war, which will be administered by other departments. So far as the Defence Minister is concerned, it is clear that his functions will be limited by the first list that you sent.

No one has suggested any restrictions on the normal powers of the Commander-in-Chief. Indeed we went beyond this and were prepared to agree to further powers being given to him as War Minister. But it is clear that the British Government's conception and ours in regard to defence differ greatly. For us it means giving it a national character and calling upon every man and woman in India to participate in it. It means trusting our own people and seeking their full co-operation in this great effort. The British Government's view seems to be based on an utter lack of confidence in the Indian people and in withholding real power from them. You refer to the paramount duty and responsibility of His Majesty's Government in regard to defence. That duty and responsibility cannot be discharged effectively unless the Indian people are made to have and feel their responsibility, and the recent past stands witness to this. The Government of India do not seem to realize that the war can only be fought on a popular basis.

Your statement that we have for the first time after three weeks suggested a change in the constitution is hardly correct. In the course of our talks reference was made to it, but it is true that we did not lay stress on it as we did not want to introduce new issues. But when you stated explicitly in your letter that we had agreed that no constitutional changes could be made during the war, we had to deny this and correct your impression.

It is the last part of your letter that has especially surprised and pained us. It seems that there has been a progressive deterioration in the British Government's attitude as our negotiations proceeded. What we were told in our very first talk with you is now denied or explained away. You told me then that there would be a National Government which would function as a Cabinet and that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King in England *vis-a-vis* his Cabinet. In regard to the India Office, you told me, that you were surprised that no one had so far mentioned this important matter, and that the practical course was to have this attached or incorporated with the Dominions' Office.

The whole of this picture which you sketched before us has now been completely shattered by what you told us during our last interview.

You have put forward an argument in your letter which at no time during our talks was mentioned by you. You refer to the 'absolute dictatorship of the majority.' It is astonishing that such a statement should be made in this connection and at this stage. This difficulty is inherent in any scheme of a mixed cabinet formed to meet an emergency, but there are many ways in which it can be provided for. Had you raised this question we would have discussed it and found a satisfactory solution. The whole approach to this question has been that a mixed cabinet should be formed and should co-operate together. We accepted this. We are not interested in the

Congress as such gaining power, but we are interested in the Indian people as a whole having freedom and power. How the Cabinet should be formed and should function was a question which might have been considered after the main question was decided; that is, the extent of power which the British Government would give up to the Indian people. Because of this we never discussed it with you or even referred to it. Nevertheless you have raised this matter for the first time, in what is presumably your last letter to us, and tried most unjustifiably to sidetrack the real issue between us.

You will remember that in my very first talk with you I pointed out that the communal or like questions did not arise at this stage. As soon as the British Government made up its mind to transfer real power and responsibility, the other questions could be tackled successfully by those concerned. You gave me the impression that you agreed with this approach.

We are convinced that if the British Government did not pursue a policy of encouraging disruption, all of us, to whatever party or group we belonged, would be able to come together and find a common line of action. But, unhappily, even in this grave hour of peril, the British Government is unable to give up its wrecking policy. We are driven to the conclusion that it attaches more importance to holding on to its rule in India, as long as it can, and promoting discord and disruption here with that end in view, than to an effective defence of India against the aggression and invasion that overhang us. To us, and to all Indians, the dominant consideration is the defence and safety of India, and it is by that test that we judge.

You mention that you propose to publish your letter to me. I presume that you have no objection now to our publishing our original resolution, your letters to us, and our letters to you.

Yours sincerely,  
(Sd.) Abul Kalam Azad.

The Right Hon'ble Sir Stafford Cripps,  
3, Queen Victoria Road,  
New Delhi.

....

3, Queen Victoria Road,  
New Delhi, April 11, 1942.

My dear Maulana Sahib,

Thank you for your letter which I have just received in reply to mine of the 10th April. I have no objection to your releasing the Congress resolution and our correspondence whenever you desire to do so.

Yours sincerely,  
(Sd.) Stafford Cripps

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad,  
Birla House,  
New Delhi.

#### APPENDIX VII

#### NEHRU'S PRESS CONFERENCE

*Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru addressed a Press conference on April 12, 1942 at New Delhi. The following is a report of the conference which appeared in the Indian Press:*

The issues before the country, both before and after the Cripps negotiations, were discussed at great length by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the course of a three-hour talk today at a Press conference.

"India is the crux of the war today," said the Pandit. "Every party knew that India can only function effectively if the Indian people are enabled to function effectively. Every country realizes this—with the exception of New Delhi and Whitehall."

Summing up the position as it emerged after the Cripps negotiations, the Pandit said: "The average reaction in the mind of the Indian people will be irritation against the British Government. The issues before the country are so grave that no responsible person can talk lightly about them or consider them in terms of bitter reactions. We cannot afford to be bitter. Bitterness clouds our mind and affects our judgment in a grave crisis. The fundamental factor is, not what the British Government has done to us or what we have done to them, but the peril to India and what we are going to do about it. So in spite of all that has happened, we are not going to embarrass the British war effort in India or the efforts of our American friends in India." The problem before them was how without participating in the war effort, and without embarrassing the Government in their war effort, they should organize their war effort in their own way for a free and independent India. That was a question which the A.I.C.C. had to consider and decide at the next meeting.

"We are not going to surrender to any invader," said Pandit Jawaharlal. He could not tolerate the idea that he or anybody else should sit idle while the battle for India was fought between two foreign armies. He could not tolerate any passive attitude, but how far he could go in a particular situation depended on the circumstances. The background, however, was quite clear—just as they had refused to give in to the British Government during the last 22 years, they were not going to surrender to any invader. They would have to resist invasion to the uttermost—by non-co-operation, by resistance, and by embarrassing the invaders in every possible way which a widely spread population could do.

The duty of every Congressman, of everyone in the country, said Pandit Jawaharlal, was to organize self-protection and self-sufficiency. There was a fundamental difference between the approach of the Congress and that of the British Government in this matter. The Congress wanted to rely upon the people, but the British Government did not even now want to trust the people. Ultimately, it was only the State which could defend the country in an armed way. They could not, for instance, raise a citizen army without the State's help. But what the Congress had already begun was an intensive programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection—in rural areas mainly—with the object of securing regional self-sufficiency in food, etc., if transport arrangements happened to fail. These units could not resist an invading army, but from the background of any resistance which they or the State might organize, they could try to prevent disorder and panic and help production. They had to organize the people for self-reliance—for looking after themselves.

Who is responsible for the failure of the Cripps negotiations? In answer to this question, Pandit Nehru explained in detail the various stages of the negotiations. If he had been asked just before his last interview with Sir Stafford Cripps he would have said that the chances of coming to an agreement were about 75 per cent. At that interview, however, the full picture which Sir Stafford, suddenly and for the first time, put before them of the proposals was such that he could not agree to it. "A big change had occurred somewhere in the middle," said the Pandit. It was obvious, he added, that there was some trouble between Sir Stafford and others. "Others were not us," said the Pandit amidst laughter.

Pandit Nehru went on to say: "While it was my extreme desire to find a way out and make India function effectively for defence and make the war a popular effort—so great was my desire that some things I have stood for during the last quarter of a century,

things which I could never have imagined for a moment I would give up, I now agreed to give up—I am convinced personally that it is impossible for us to agree to the proposals as they eventually emerged from the British Government's mind. I am in complete and whole-hearted agreement with the Congress resolution and the letters of the Congress President."

The change in the attitude of Sir Stafford Cripps which led to the sudden breakdown of the negotiations was then described by Pandit Nehru. From the first, the impression which Sir Stafford had given was that the new Government would be a National Government. Sir Stafford had himself often used the words "National Cabinet." He had also said that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King—in other words, a constitutional head. The language used by Sir Stafford had led them to assume that everything was being transferred except Defence and also that the Viceroy would not interfere with the decision of the Cabinet—though he might have special powers, such as in connection with the States or some major issue. So the question of the new Government's powers, etc., was not even discussed. At the last interview on Thursday night, however, the picture which Sir Stafford gave showed that the premises and assumptions on which they had been arguing had no real foundation. Sir Stafford began to talk of the Viceroy's "Executive Council" and not a "National Government." Names did make a difference. "If we go to the country, talking about the Viceroy's Executive Council, what would the people think?" asked the Pandit amidst laughter. They agreed to the legal phraseology, to the words "Executive Council," but contrary to their old assumption, Sir Stafford suddenly made it perfectly clear that there would be no essential change between the position of the Viceroy's Council and that of the new Government which they were asked to join. "I was amazed," declared Pandit Nehru. It might be that he had been pulled up by his senior partner in England or someone here. "We cannot change laws," said Sir Stafford, but when he was asked, "Tell us at least what conventions you propose. Will they function as a Cabinet? Will the Viceroy work as a constitutional head?" Sir Stafford replied: "I am totally unable to say anything on the subject, because it is completely within the discretion of the Viceroy. Go to him later on and discuss the matter with him. I cannot interfere or indicate what should be done." So it amounted to the old August offer again—with a few minor changes. They were merely asked to agree to join the Viceroy's Council practically unconditionally—with the vague background provided by the Cabinet's declaration.

Dealing with the Defence question, Pandit Nehru said that at no time had it been suggested by the Congress that the normal powers of the Commander-in-Chief for carrying on the war in an effective way should be interfered with. But in addition to his powers as Commander-in-Chief, he was now having other powers which were really those of a Defence Minister. Pandit Nehru said that the removal of Defence from the responsibilities of the new Government made the position of the Defence Ministry absurd and ridiculous. Their conception of Defence was different from that of the Government. It was not keeping a regiment here and there, but they wanted to mobilize hundreds of millions of Indians. They wanted to make every man and woman do something for the war—make it a popular war. The military way was to fight with their armies and, if the latter failed, to surrender, but their conception was different. They would not surrender whatever happened—whatever happened to military forces, popular resistance should continue to the end—as in China and Russia. Could they discharge their duty in this spirit? Could they make India

hum as an organized unit of resistance? Could they make India feel that she was fighting her own war for her freedom? That was their idea in asking for a popular conception of Defence, but the Government's attitude as put to them was a singularly complacent attitude—a conception of India from a standpoint which was peculiar only to England. "We are in the right. All those who are against us are not only in the wrong, but damnably in the wrong."

Pandit Nehru said that at first a certain formula was given by Sir Stafford according to which the Commander-in-Chief was to be War Minister and the Defence Minister was to have certain functions entrusted to him. Attached to it was a list—practically exhaustive—of the functions entrusted to the Defence Minister. They were propaganda, canteens, petroleum, amenities, stationery, and subjects of that kind. The subjects proposed to be allotted were such that "they would have made the Defence Minister's position ridiculous in the eyes of the public," said the Pandit. It was not acceptable to the Congress Working Committee. Then came a new formula—at the instance of a third party but presumably with Sir Stafford's approval—with no list of subjects attached but with a description of the functions attached to the Defence Minister.

In the Working Committee's opinion, this afforded a basis for arriving at an agreed formula for Defence, but the really important point was—what would be the subjects transferred to the Defence Minister? Sir Stafford did not reply to a letter asking for a list of these subjects; "At no stage did we receive them," said Pandit Nehru. When they asked him personally, Sir Stafford referred them to the *Army Manual*. Later, Sir Stafford entered into a long disquisition on the Indian Army—that it was really an offshoot of the British Army controlled by the British Government, through their representative, the Commander-in-Chief. It was explained to Sir Stafford on behalf of the Congress that it was not their intention to do anything to upset present arrangements, but what they wanted was, firstly, to make the Indian Army feel that they were a National Army, and, secondly, to make the people feel that the Army was theirs. They wanted to give the national background, the psychological appeal, necessary for a popular war. Sir Stafford's attitude was, however, rigid. In the end, he said that the lists of subjects were those already given in his original formula.

Sir Stafford refused to follow the Australian model saying that Mr. Curtin in Australia had even greater powers than Mr. Churchill had in England. As regards the citizen army, Sir Stafford said that the matter would lie within the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief, but he added that the Commander-in-Chief would probably agree. If he did not agree, it was open to the Ministers to resign.

Commenting on this attitude of the Government, the Pandit said: "That is not the way to bring about a settlement." He went on to say: "That is not the way to fight a war—not the lackadaisical way of the Viceroy's House and the Government of India. If there is a National Government, everybody will have to work or get out. It is not an evening-dress war. It is work, work, work. Those who sit to dinner in an evening-dress at 8-15 are not going to win this war." In reply to those who talked of the want of equipment as a reason against a citizen army, he cited the example of China and Spain. The former was now self-sufficient so far as small arms were concerned. In India, with a National Government, they could double or treble the production of our factories. They could do without luxuries and turn those factories producing non-essential goods into factories for small arms. The whole conception of the citizen army was, he said, a practical conception, a psychological conception, an essential conception.

The Pandit went on to narrate how a person who had become a German prisoner and had managed to escape told him and others what the Germans thought of the Indian troops, how much they had been struck by their courage and efficiency in action. "It is a magnificent army. What could we not do, if we had such people to draw upon?" said the Germans. "If they fight like this in a mercenary way, how much better would they fight if they thought they were fighting for their own freedom?" It was really a question of psychological approach, declared the Pandit. Explaining further, the Pandit said: "The whole approach was one of, lighting a spark in hundreds of millions of minds in India. It was not an easy responsibility for anyone to undertake. Nevertheless, we felt that circumstances demanded it and whatever our grievances with the British Government, whatever the past history of our relations, we could not allow that to come in the way of what we considered a duty to our country at present."

Referring to the Congress movement for self-sufficiency and self-protection, the Pandit said: "If we were the Government we would have immediately approached the problem in that way. As it is, even in an attempt in that direction, we would meet, not with Japanese, but British resistance. If the Government of India was wise enough, it would not come in our way in developing this movement. It is not a movement to break laws. It is a movement which indirectly helps war effort."

Referring to the future, Pandit Nehru said: "India and Russia are the two important theatres of war. Little else counts for the present. Much will, of course, depend on the next two or three months in the Russo-German War. A great deal will depend on India or what happens as between Germany and Russia; but apart from that India is going to be for the next three or four months the crux of the war. It will make a difference to the length of the war and the intensity of the war. Every country in the world realizes this, except, of course, the big people in New Delhi and Whitehall—they are slow of understanding and comprehension—and, therefore, you have these frantic radio appeals from Germany and Japan.

If today a National Government of India said, 'We are going to arm the Indian people. We may not have the best of modern arms, aeroplanes, tanks; but we are going to arm them with such guns as we can make,' think how the world situation will change; what reaction it will have on Germany and Japan and also in the Allied countries.

In answer to a question, Pandit Nehru said:

"So far as I know India, and I know it tolerably well, the major sentiment in India naturally is one of hostility to the British in India. You cannot root out 150 years of past history and all that has happened in those years. It has sunk deep down into the Indian soul. Suppose we had come to an agreement and had to convert, to change, that sentiment suddenly, we could have done it if we could have given a sensation of freedom to the people of India. The fundamental factor today is distrust or dislike of the British Government. It is not pro-Japanese sentiment. It is anti-British sentiment. That may occasionally lead individuals to pro-Japanese expression of views. This is short-sighted. It is a slave's sentiment, a slave's way of thinking, to imagine that to get rid of one person who is dominating us we can expect another person to help us and not dominate us later. Free men ought not to think that way. It distresses me that any Indian should talk of the Japanese liberating India. The whole past history of Japan has been one of dominating others. Japan comes here either for Imperialist reasons straightout or to fight with the British Govern-

ment. Anyhow, whatever the reason, if it comes here, it does not come here to liberate."

"If an army comes here under the leadership of Subhas Bose, what should be our reaction to it?" was the next question.

Before answering the question, the Pandit referred to the differences between Mr. Bose and the Congress, and said: "I do not frankly doubt the *bona fides* of Mr. Bose. I think he has come to the conclusion which I think is wrong, but nevertheless a conclusion which he thinks is for the good of India. We parted company with him many years ago. We have drifted further apart and today we are very far apart. It is not good enough for me, because of my past friendship, because I do not challenge his motives, not to realize that the way he has chosen is utterly wrong, a way which I not only cannot accept but must oppose, if it takes shape, because any force that may come from outside, it really comes as a dummy force under the Japanese control. In effect it helps the invader. It may help under the mistaken notion that the invader will play fair. It is a bad thing psychologically for the Indian masses to think in terms of being liberated by an outside agency."

"I think," he continued, "it is the job and function of every Indian to be in India today, to face the dangers and risks, whatever might happen in India."

The Pandit referred in this connection to a suggestion made by Col. Johnson that he would be glad if the Pandit could go to America on a brief visit. The Pandit said he had decided not to go at a time of national peril like the present.

Replying to a further question about Mr. Bose's possible intentions, Pandit Nehru said he did not know them, but added: "One thing seems to be obvious. How Mr. Bose will function I cannot say, but presuming the authenticity of the broadcasts, he has taken up a certain position of friendship and alliance with the Axis Powers, and from that certain consequences naturally follow. I think it is justifiable on the basis of those broadcasts, which presumably are his, to come to the conclusion that he has allied himself with the Axis Powers, on what conditions and terms I cannot say."

Was there any difference between our resistance to the British Government and that to any outside invader? In reply, the Pandit said:

"There is a difference in the approach to the kind of resistance we have been offering to the British in India and our approach to resistance to a new invader. We submit to neither of course; but, as you know, for the last two and a half years we have expressed our sympathy with certain larger causes. We have expressed our desire to fight for those larger causes. We have also expressed our intense antipathy to Fascism and Nazism, to what the Japanese have done in China and Manchuria. And so far as our foreign outlook is concerned, during the last many years we have followed a definite line that influenced us immediately in regard to our attitude to this war. Before the war we criticized the policy of appeasement in Munich. That outlook governs us today. I do feel definitely that it would be a tragedy for the world if Germany and Japan won the war and dominated this world. I don't want that to happen. I would have liked to play my part in this world drama more effectively. That was why I went to the utmost limit to come to terms with the British Government.

"Our policy as laid down by Mahatma Gandhi and others was not one of embarrassment, psychological embarrassment, of the war

effort. If our approach had not been one of sympathy, our attitude would have been one of direct embarrassment, and we could have broken the whole war effort in India, both in regard to production and even in regard to the army proper. We did not do that because of wider sympathy for the larger cause. While we wanted to dissociate ourselves from the activities of the British Government, nevertheless we did not embarrass them. In regard to Japanese invasion, we are out to embarrass them to the utmost. There is a difference between a new invasion and old, but there is another difference also. So far as I am concerned, in spite of the language of high authority it uses, the British invasion is a played-out affair, and the new invasion may not be a played-out affair; but ultimately our attitude is governed by our ideological sympathy with certain causes. It is a hateful notion that after five years of war China should be defeated. It is a hateful notion that Russia, which represents certain human values, which means a great deal to human civilization, should be defeated. But ultimately, naturally, I have to judge every question from the Indian viewpoint. If India perishes, I must say—selfishly, if you like to call it—it does not do me any good if other nations survive.”

“How could the United Nations help India now?” asked an American correspondent.

Pandit Nehru replied: “The best thing they can do is to acknowledge India as an independent nation. I am prepared to welcome help and assistance from any nation or nations, if they are prepared to recognize India as an independent nation. That is all that I desire. I am quite convinced that America would like real popular war effort in India.”

“I do not agree with Mahatmaji,” he declared, replying to a question about scorched earth. He added: “Although I have given that straight answer, it is not a complete answer. I have no doubt that if I was in the National Government I would have burnt and destroyed everything that would help the enemy, not caring whose property it was; but I am afraid that the British Government as constituted today, if it follows the policy, it is going to follow it in a wrong and perverted way, thinking partly of hampering the Japanese, but of hampering India a great deal. Therefore, I am not prepared to trust their scorched earth policy.”

The Pandit explained that there were many ways of getting over the loss consequent on the adoption of a scorched earth policy and referred to the insurance scheme in Britain. He also declared that there should be a Government guarantee—maybe, America might come into the picture—that every help would be given to rebuild industry as it was, if not better than it was.

In the course of his talk, Pandit Nehru removed two or three misconceptions. In reply to Sir Stafford's charge that the Congress had, for the first time, in its letter of April 10, asked for big changes immediately in the constitution, the Pandit explained that the reference in the letter was only intended to remove a misunderstanding. In one of his letters, Sir Stafford had said that the Congress had agreed that there should be no constitutional changes in the interim period. As this was not correct, the President explained the position. The Congress had merely said that it did not want to enter into an argument now on these constitutional questions, but they had made no commitment of the kind that they agreed not to ask for any immediate constitutional changes. Their position was this: “While we are not agreeing, we are not pressing this. It is not an issue.” Sir Stafford was not, therefore, correct in saying that a major issue had been raised.



Pandit Nehru referred to the offer made by Mr. Churchill, at a critical time in the war, to France for a union with England. The suggestion made by Pandit Nehru was that Parliament should pass a small Bill of six sentences giving independent status to India and agreeing to the principle of self-determination. Other details, communal and other, could be left over for settlement later, but if this had been done, the whole approach to the question would have become different—as between England and India and also between the communities. The Congress point of view was this—they were prepared to have a National Government for war purposes, but as regards the future Government, they were prepared to leave over for future consideration the question of detailed and precise proposals for future Government. Pandit Nehru said, however, that the present proposals would have also to be considered with the viewpoint of the future. If the independence of India was now accepted in principle, it would have a great psychological effect on the people.

Asked about Sir Stafford's reference to the "tyrannical rule of a majority" in his farewell statement, Pandit Nehru said:

"I want to make it perfectly clear that throughout our talks and correspondence, except for the last two letters, there was no reference at all at any stage in the slightest degree to the question of majority rule, because much as we disliked it, we accepted the idea of a composite Cabinet formed from different groups representing different ideologies in the country, some coming among others from the Muslim League and from the Hindu Mahasabha and Sikhs. We accepted that, although it was a thing which would have made the functioning of the National Government very difficult. At no stage, did we discuss the number of any group in the Council. It was important, but we did not discuss it because we, speaking on behalf of the Congress, never laid stress on the Congress having this or that. We wanted no power for the Congress. We always talked in terms of what the National Government would have, whoever may be there and whatever numbers it may consist of. We talked of it as a group and of what power that group should have. The communal issue in any form was never discussed, except that Sir Stafford Cripps often repeated one formula, that he was only concerned with agreement between three groups in India, the British Government, the Congress and the Muslim League. He did not care whether others agreed or not, but if any of these three did not agree the scheme fell through."

"For the first time," he went on, "this question was definitely emphasized by Sir Stafford Cripps in his letter dated April 10 in which he used the phrase 'tyrannical rule of the majority.' Now, for an eminent lawyer and constitutionalist like Sir Stafford to use these phrases in this manner is extraordinary. We were thinking in terms really not even of a legislature but of a Cabinet consisting of 15 persons. What the proportions in that Cabinet may be we never discussed. Suppose there was the so-called Congress majority in it, though the Congress was not thinking on those lines. But his mind was continually functioning, balancing the different communal factors. Suppose then, in a Cabinet of 15 there was a Congress majority of eight or nine. Now, cabinets, if they are to function at all, cannot function and do not function, especially in war-time, by majority. You must have a certain homogeneity or common outlook; otherwise the Cabinet may break up. Sir Stafford has been continuously reminding us of the ultimate sanction of resignation. If we had that ultimate sanction, so also every group in that Cabinet had that ultimate sanction. So, to talk of the tyranny of the majority is amazing and fantastic nonsense."

Pandit Nehru referred to the mention of the "Hindu Press" in one of Sir Stafford's letters. When further questioned, he said he meant

the *Hindustan Times*. That in itself showed how he was continually thinking in regard to every matter in terms of Hindu and Muslim.

Pandit Nehru observed he could not conceive of Mr. Jinnah or Dr. Savarkar really disagreeing with anything that the Congress had put to Sir Stafford in regard to the proposals for the immediate present.

Earlier at the conference, Pandit Nehru declared: "Today the dominant factor is the imminent peril to India, and I want you to appreciate what I say. We agreed to things which in the last 22 years we would never have dreamt of agreeing to or coming near. In these 22 years we have stood for something. Not only the Congress but vast numbers of people outside the formal folds of the Congress, even communal organizations, have demanded independence. For the first time in these 22 years, I swallowed many a bitter pill when I said I was prepared to agree to many things so as somehow to come to an agreement. I did want to throw all my sympathy and all the energy I possess in the organization of the defence of India."

#### APPENDIX VIII

#### MUSLIM LEAGUE RESOLUTION

*The following is the text of the resolution passed by the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League on the Cripps proposals. The resolution was released to the press on April 11:*

The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League have given their most earnest and careful consideration to the announcement made by Mr. Churchill, the British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons on March 11, 1942, and the Draft Declaration of the War Cabinet of His Majesty's Government regarding the future of India and also the interim proposals, during the critical period which now faces India, for the immediate participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country.

The Committee appreciate that the British Prime Minister, in his pronouncement, made it clear that the Draft Declaration embodied only the proposals of His Majesty's Government and not their decision, and that they are subject to agreement between the main elements in India, thus maintaining the validity of the Declaration of August 8, 1940, which had promised to the Mussalmans that neither the machinery for the framing of the constitution should be set up nor the constitution itself should be enforced without the approval and consent of Muslim India.

The Committee, while expressing their gratification that the possibility of Pakistan is recognized by implication by providing for the establishment of two or more independent Unions in India, regret that the proposals of His Majesty's Government, embodying the fundamentals, are not open to any modification and, therefore, no alternative proposals are invited. In view of the rigidity of the attitude of His Majesty's Government with regard to the fundamentals not being open to any modification, the Committee have no alternative but to say that the proposals in their present form are unacceptable to them for reasons given below.

(1) The Mussalmans, after twenty-five years of genuine efforts for the reconciliation of the two major communities and the bitter experience of the failure of such efforts, are convinced that it is neither just nor possible, in the interest of peace and happiness of the two peoples, to compel them to constitute one Indian Union,

composed of the two principal nations—Hindus and Muslims—which appears to be the main object of His Majesty's Government, as adumbrated in the Preamble of the Draft Declaration, the creation of more than one union being relegated only to the realm of remote possibility and is purely illusory.

(2) In the Draft Declaration a constitution-making body has been proposed with the primary object of creating one Indian union. So far as the Muslim League is concerned, it has finally decided that the only solution of India's constitutional problem is the partition of India into independent zones; and it will, therefore, be unfair to the Mussalmans to compel them to enter such a constitution-making body, whose main object is the creation of a new Indian Union. With conditions as they are, it will be not only futile but on the contrary may exacerbate bitterness and animosity amongst the various elements in the country.

Besides, the machinery which has been proposed for the creation of the constitution-making body, namely, that it will consist of members elected by the newly elected Lower Houses of the eleven provinces, upon the cessation of hostilities, as a single electoral college by the system of proportional representation, is a fundamental departure from the right of the Mussalmans, hitherto enjoyed by them, to elect their representatives by means of separate electorates, which is the only sure way in which true representatives of the Mussalmans can be chosen.

The constitution-making body will take decisions by a bare majority on all questions of most vital and paramount character involved in the framing of the constitution, which is a departure from the fundamental principles of justice and contrary to constitutional practice so far followed in the various countries and dominions; and the Mussalmans, by agreeing to this will, instead of exercising their right and judgment as a constituent factor, be at the entire mercy of the constitution-making body, in which they will be a minority of about twenty-five per cent.

(3) The right of non-accession to the Union, as contemplated in the Draft Declaration, has been conceded, presumably, in response to the insistent demands by the Mussalmans for the partition of India, but the method and procedure laid down are such as to negative the professed object, for, in the draft proposals, the right of non-accession has been given to the existing provinces, which have been formed from time to time for administrative convenience and on no logical basis.

The Mussalmans cannot be satisfied by such a Declaration on a vital question affecting their future destiny and demand a clear and precise pronouncement on the subject. Any attempt to solve the future problem of India by the process of evading the real issues is to court disaster.

In the draft proposals no procedure has been laid down as to how the verdict of the province is to be obtained in favour of, or against, accession to one Union; but in the letter dated April 2, from the secretary of Sir Stafford Cripps, addressed to the President of the All-India Muslim League, it is stated that "a province should reach the decision whether or not to stand out of the Union by a vote in the Legislative Assembly on a resolution to stand in. If the majority for accession to the Union is less than sixty per cent., the minority will have the right to demand a plebiscite of the adult population." In this connection it must be emphasized that in the provinces where the Mussalmans are in a majority, as in the case of the major provinces of Bengal and Punjab, they are in a

minority in the Legislative Assemblies; and in the Assemblies of Sind and the North-West Frontier Province, the total number, namely, sixty and fifty respectively, is so small and the weightage given to the non-Muslims so heavy that it can be easily manipulated and a decision under such conditions cannot be the true criterion of ascertaining the real opinion of the Mussalmans of those provinces.

As regards the suggested plebiscite in the provinces in which the Mussalmans are in a majority, in the event of the requisite majority not being available in the Legislative Assemblies, the procedure laid down is that reference shall be made to the whole adult population of the provinces and not to the Mussalmans alone, which is to deny them the inherent right to self-determination.

(4) With regard to the Indian States, it is the considered opinion of the Committee that it is a matter for them to decide whether to join or not to join or form a union.

(5) With regard to the treaties to be negotiated between the Crown and the Indian Union or Unions, the proposals do not indicate as to what would happen in case of disagreement on the terms between the contracting parties, nor is there any provision made as to what would be the procedure when there is a difference of opinion in negotiating a revision of treaty arrangements with the Indian States in the new situation.

(6) With regard to the interim arrangement, there is no definite proposal except the bare statement that His Majesty's Government desire and invite the effective and immediate participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. The Committee are, therefore, unable to express their opinion until a complete picture is available. Another reason why the Committee are unable to express their opinion of the interim arrangements for participation in the counsels of the country, is that Sir Stafford Cripps has made it clear that the scheme goes through as a whole or is rejected as a whole and that it would not be possible to retain only the part relating to the immediate arrangements at the centre and discard the rest of the draft scheme, and as the Committee has come to the conclusion that the proposals for the future are unacceptable, it will serve no useful purpose to deal further with the question of the immediate arrangements.

In conclusion the Committee wish to point out that the position of the Muslim League has been and is that unless the principle of Pakistan scheme, as embodied in the Lahore Resolution dated March, 1940, which is now the creed of the All-India Muslim League, namely,

"The establishment of completely independent States formed by demarcating geographically contiguous units into regions which shall be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Mussalmans are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and eastern zones of India, shall be grouped together to constitute independent States as Muslim free national homelands in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign;

"That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in the above mentioned units and regions for the protection of their

religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them;

"That in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in a minority, adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them."

is unequivocally accepted and the right of the Mussalmans to self-determination is conceded by means of a machinery which will reflect the true verdict of Muslim India, it is not possible for the Muslim League to accept any proposal or scheme regarding the future.

## APPENDIX IX

### HINDU MAHASABHA MEMORANDUM

*The following is the Hindu Mahasabha Memorandum on the Cripps proposals:*

There are several points in the declaration which are more or less satisfactory but, according to the statement unfortunately made by Sir Stafford Cripps, the scheme of His Majesty's Government is to be accepted or rejected in toto. As some essential features of the scheme are wholly or partially unacceptable to us, the Hindu Mahasabha has no other alternative but to reject the scheme.

One of the cardinal points in the scheme which Sir Stafford Cripps has put forward on behalf of the War Cabinet is the right which has been conferred on the provinces of British India to keep out of the Indian Union or Federation. The basic principle of the Hindu Mahasabha is that India is one and indivisible. In the religious and cultural aspect there has been recognized the fundamental unity of India by the Hindus throughout the ages, and even unity in political sphere was an accomplished fact in many periods of this country's history. Even during some two centuries of British rule, the political unity of India has been recognized and fostered and this has always been claimed by Britain herself as her finest achievement. Besides, India has been treated as one political and constitutional unit under the Constitution Act of 1935. The right to step out of the Indian Federation will stimulate communal and sectional animosities. The other option given to the non-accessing provinces to set up a rival Pakistan Federation constitutes, in view of such Muslim movements as Pakistan and Pathanistan involving threats of joining hands with Afghanistan and other Muslim nations, a serious menace to India's security and unity, and this may lead to civil war in the country. The Hindu Mahasabha cannot be true to itself and to the best interests of Hindustan (India) if it is a party to any proposal which involves the political partition of India in any shape or form.

The Hindu Mahasabha, therefore, has fundamental objections to the proposals.

The right of non-accession of any province to the Indian Union cannot be justified on the principle of self-determination, and no such right can be imposed by an outside authority. India has already been one unitary State, and the existing provinces are constituted as administrative units. The analogy of sovereign States entering into a federation and surrendering a portion of their

sovereignty for certain common purposes cannot apply to Indian provinces.

According to the scheme of Sir Stafford Cripps, a treaty will be signed between His Majesty's Government and the Constituent Assembly, and such treaty will implement the undertakings given by His Majesty's Government for the protection of racial and religious minorities. In the framing of this treaty all parties and sections will have an effective say. Such a treaty ought to satisfy completely the minorities. If, however, any minority is not satisfied with the safeguards in the proposed constitution, then the question of such safeguards can be referred to the tribunal of arbitration to be appointed by the Constituent Assembly in consultation with the disputing parties. We want to take our stand on justice and fair play, and we do not ask for any rights or privileges which we are not prepared to extend to any community.

The Hindu Mahasabha is not so much concerned with a declaration as to the future, but the real question is whether England is willing to transfer immediately real political power to India and, if so, to what extent. It notes with regret that the scheme which Sir Stafford Cripps has announced is nebulous, vague and unsatisfactory with regard to the interim arrangements. The Government of India Act of 1935 still maintains the bureaucracy in power with the Governor-General and the Governors as their powerful protagonists. But for successful prosecution of the war it is essential to transfer real power to Indian hands and to set up conventions whereby Indian Ministers can formulate and execute a policy of National Defence, including the formation of national militia and the arming of the Indian people for the defence of the country.

It has been the demand of the Hindu Mahasabha that India should be immediately declared an independent nation with free and equal status in the Indo-British Commonwealth. The declaration promises full national sovereignty in the future, but the constitutional position and status of India during the interim period have not been made at all clear.

Particularly in regard to Defence, the scheme of His Majesty's Government is unacceptable to us.

It is urgent and imperative that if India is to be an effective partner in the struggle for freedom, her Defence policy must be determined and her Defence arrangements must be made on the responsibility of her own Defence Minister enjoying the confidence of all sections of the people. The tragic experiences of Malaya and Burma have demonstrated that apart from the deplorable failure of military strategy, the apathy and hostility of the people who were deliberately kept unarmed, contributed to the British reverses. The psychology necessary for full and willing co-operation in the present war amongst the Indian people cannot be created unless and until the defence of India is put in Indian hands.

We note with satisfaction that this scheme provides for a constitution-making body for framing the future constitution of India, and that the Constituent Assembly may begin its work with the declaration of India's independence. But the principle on which it will be constituted is vicious. The constitution-making body will be elected on the basis of the Communal Award which is not only anti-national but runs counter to the essential principles of democracy.

Unless and until the scheme of His Majesty's Government is radically altered and readjusted on the vital issues mentioned above,

the Hindu Mahasabha cannot be a party to the acceptance inasmuch as the scheme is to be accepted or rejected in toto.

## APPENDIX X

### SIKHS REJECT PROPOSALS

The Sikh All-Parties Committee in a representation to Sir Stafford Cripps rejected the proposals unacceptable to them for the following reasons:

(i) Instead of maintaining and strengthening the integrity of India a specific provision has been made for separation of provinces and constitution of Pakistan, and

(ii) The cause of Sikh community has been lamentably betrayed.

Ever since the British advent our community has fought for England in every battlefield of the Empire, and this is our reward, that our position in the Punjab, which England promised to hold in trust and in which we occupied a predominant position, has been finally liquidated.

Why should a province that fails to secure 3/5 majority in its legislature, in which a religious community enjoys statutory majority, be allowed to hold a plebiscite and given the benefit of a bare majority? In fairness this right should have been conceded to the communities who are in permanent minority in the legislature.

Further, why should not the population of any area opposed to separation be given the right to record its verdict and to form an autonomous unit?

We are sure you know that Punjab proper extended up to the banks of Jhelum excluding Jhang and Multan districts, and the trans-Jhelum area was added by the conquest of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and retained by the British for administrative convenience. It would be altogether unjust to allow the extraneous trans-Jhelum population which only accidentally came into the province to dominate the future of the Punjab proper.

We give below the figures which abundantly prove our contention:

From the boundary of Delhi to the banks of Ravi river the population is divided as follows:

Muslims 4,505,000; Sikhs and other non-Muslims 7,646,000.

From the Delhi boundary to the banks of the Jhelum river excluding Multan and Jhang districts:

Muslims 8,288,000; Sikhs and other non-Muslims 9,348,000.

To this may be added the population of Sikh States of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kapurthala and Faridkot, which is about 26 lakhs. Of this the Muslims constitute barely 20 per cent. and this reduces the ratio of Muslim population still further.

We do not wish to labour the point any more. We have lost all hope of receiving any consideration. We shall resist, however, by all possible means separation of the Punjab from the All-India Union. We shall never permit our motherland to be at the mercy of those who disown it.

## APPENDIX XI

### ✓ STATES PEOPLES' CONFERENCE

The Standing Committee of the All-India States Peoples' Conference in rejecting the proposals said:

The Committee has noted that the whole approach to this question on the part of the British Cabinet is vitiated by the extraordinary

assumption that only the British Government and the Rulers of the States count in the disposal of these vital issues. Nowhere is any reference made to the people of the States who number 90 and odd millions. This would in any event have been an extraordinary assumption and procedure, but in the modern world and in the course of the world war that is going on, when so much is repeatedly said about a new order and democracy and freedom, such a deliberate omission and ignoring of 90 million people is significant of the way the mind of the British Government functions, even in these times of peril and disaster. It is an insult to those people and any proposals based on such insults can only be resisted to the uttermost. The only alternative to such a course would be for the States people to give up all their cherished objectives and dreams and submit indefinitely to an intolerable slavery.

In these circumstances, it is hardly necessary for the Standing Committee to consider these proposals in any detail when they are based on unwarranted assumptions and promises which can never be accepted. Nevertheless, the Committee desires to emphasize that these proposals are utterly harmful and injurious to the cause of freedom both in the States and in India as a whole. The Committee desires to repeat what has been authoritatively stated before, that it "cannot admit the right of the Rulers of the Indian States or of foreign vested interests to come in the way of Indian freedom. Sovereignty in India must rest with the people within the States or in the provinces and all other interests must be subordinated to their vital interests."

To treat the so-called treaties between the British Government and the Rulers of Indian States as a justification for the political fragmentation of India in opposition to or ignoring the opinion of the people of the States is a position wholly untenable in the modern world. It must be remembered that only 30 or 40 States have such treaties and that in the making of these treaties the States' people had no hand. These treaties were made long ago in circumstances which no longer exist. It is intolerable that these ancient treaties should be made to come in the way now of political and economic advance on the part of the people.

The States Peoples' Conference holds as its fundamental objective that the present States system in India must be ended and responsible government should be established in the States.

In the proposals under consideration no reference whatever is made to the internal democratization of the States. It is stated there that the States will have the option at two stages to join the rest of India. First, in the drafting of a constitution; secondly, in accepting membership in the Indian Union. At neither stage is there any reference to the people of the States and only the Rulers are supposed to decide these vital questions which affect the people. The people of the States demand the right of self-determination at every stage through their elected representatives, and any decision made without reference to them can have no binding effect on them.

In the event of the Rulers of the States keeping out of the Union, it would appear that British Paramountcy is intended to continue together with all the other evils that exist at present.

The Standing Committee, therefore, rejects and condemns these proposals put forward on behalf of the British War Cabinet in regard to the States. The whole scheme is a complete negation of the avowed war aims of the British Government and would appear to be an attempt to consolidate the British Colonial domination in large parts



of India and to maintain autocratic rule in the States. The Committee declares that nothing short of full self-determination and the right to frame the constitution of the States as well as to participate in the Constituent Assembly for all India through their elected representatives can be accepted or can meet the requirements of the situation.

The Standing Committee respectfully draws the attention of the Indian National Congress towards all these resolutions and statements of policy that have emanated from its executive from time to time with regard to the Indian States and trusts that the Congress will not accept any constitutional scheme for India in which the right of self-determination for the people of the States has not been conceded on a par with British India and in which provision is not made for the same democratic, political and economic rights as for the people of the provinces.

The Standing Committee calls upon the people of the States to strengthen their respective organizations in order to bring pressure upon their Rulers for the fulfilment of their demands and to be prepared for all the eventualities that will necessarily arise in the course of such awakening.

## APPENDIX XII

### MOMIN CONFERENCE MEMORANDUM

*The following is the resolution of the Working Committee of the All-India Momin Conference on the Cripps proposals:*

The Working Committee of the All-India Momin Conference at its resumed sitting at Delhi adopted the following resolution with regard to the Cripps proposals:

The Working Committee firmly believes that the solidarity, integrity and unity of India is vitally essential for the common good of the Indian people and especially in the best interests of the Muslims of India. The Committee cannot, however, lose sight of the fact that a section of the Muslims is against the introduction of a single unitary system of Government in this country, apprehending such a system to be detrimental to the interests of the Muslims residing in the Muslim majority provinces. But the Committee, being conscious of the fact that the fear and apprehensions of such Muslims are the outcome of the mutual distrust and suspicion of the communities inhabiting this country, has full belief that such communal dissensions and animosities as exist at present will completely disappear with the establishment of full self-rule in India.

Further, in the opinion of the Committee the proposal relating to the option given to the provinces to keep out of the proposed Indian Union has been ingeniously devised, demonstrably in the interest of Britain rather than that of the Muslims, inasmuch as its practical effect would inevitably be to create several 'Ulsters' within India to the advantage of Britain rather than satisfactorily solving the thorny problem of the protection of the Muslim minorities in the Hindu majority provinces.

The Working Committee, being of the opinion that the constitution-making body as envisaged by the proposals would reflect the opinion of only 10 per cent. of the inhabitants of India and can, therefore, hardly be called a democratic body, is very keen that such constitution-making body be framed in a way so as to represent the largest possible number of the populace, because no constitution would

be acceptable to the masses unless they be fully represented in such a body.

In view of the British refusal to hand over the control of India's defence to the Indians, it becomes evidently clear that the proposals have been made not so much with the intention of parting with power and satisfying the Indian demand for complete independence and freedom as with the object of securing the active co-operation of India for fighting out successfully the enemy now threatening the shores of India by fully mobilizing the moral and material resources of the country, which, however, in the opinion of the Committee, cannot be achieved unless the masses are made to understand and feel that this war is being fought in the interest of India and that it is their own war.

The Committee regards the manner in which the Rulers of Indian States have been given right to nominate representatives to the constitution-making body as utterly undemocratic and thinks that it will take away all the more the none-too-wide democratic character of that body as a result of which one-third the people of India would be deprived of their right to send in representatives of their own choice into the body which would decide their fate.

In view of the above, the Working Committee considers the said proposals as absolutely unsatisfactory and miserably falling short of the expectations and aspirations of the Muslim masses and regards them as quite unacceptable unless they be modified in the manner suggested below:

(1) That no province be allowed to keep out of the Indian Union unless the scheme of one single Indian Union were given a fair trial for full ten years.

(2) That instead of allowing the existing Lower Houses of the provinces to nominate representatives to the constitution-making body, provision be made to constitute that body by electing its members by means of adult franchise;

(3) That the control of the defence of India be forthwith transferred entirely into Indian hands; and

(4) That the peoples of the Indian States be given the right to elect representatives to the constitution-making body.

### APPENDIX XIII

#### DEPRESSED CLASSES REJECT SCHEME

*The following memorandum was adopted by the Working Committee of the All-India Depressed Classes League.*

In the existing circumstances, when a catastrophe of unparalleled magnitude is threatening the world, it is urgent and imperative that conditions necessary for India's whole-hearted participation in her defence should be created forthwith. This is possible only if her defence policy is determined and her defence arrangements are made on the responsibility of her own Defence Member enjoying the full confidence of his countrymen. As such the defence of India must be put in Indian hands.

The Indian aspiration has been the complete independence of the country and nothing short of it will satisfy the progressive elements in the country. Independence of any country is all the more necessary for the poor and submerged population of the country. And as the depressed classes constitute the majority of such population, the

League demands an immediate declaration of India's complete independence by the British Government.

While it is apparently gratifying to note that the proposal concedes the right of the country to frame her constitution through the constitution-making body, there is a very subtle move to impair the integrity of the country for all times. The right of accession of any province to the Indian union envisages an India divided in herself and her people constantly fighting among themselves. This device will only act as a stimulus for communal and sectional animosities and will prove detrimental to the progress of the poor people. The League, therefore, declares that nothing short of one single Indian union for all India can be accepted as India is an indivisible whole.

The League has always held that to make distinction between British India and Indian India in any constitutional scheme for India is a pernicious policy. The people of the States should be given the same right and opportunity of sending their representatives to the Constituent Assembly elected by popular votes as the people of the provinces.

As the depressed classes, religiously and culturally, have been one with the Hindu society, any effort to drive a wedge between the so-called caste Hindus and the depressed classes will prove injurious to both of them. The estrangement of feeling consequent upon separate electorates will give cause for constant strife between these two sections of the Hindus which may ultimately lead to the disruption and destruction of the weaker section. Therefore, the League strongly condemns the move of those persons who want to encourage the separatist mentality among a section of the depressed classes and declares that it will resist all such designs. The League holds that so long as the depressed classes are backward socially, economically, politically and educationally they require special provisions for safeguarding their rights and interests. But these special provisions should last so long as the depressed classes do not come to the same level with the so-called caste Hindus.

#### DR. AMBEDKAR'S LETTER

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah rejecting the proposals wrote to Sir Stafford Cripps as follows:

The Cripps proposals are calculated to do the greatest harm to the Depressed Classes. We told you when we met you on March 30 that the proposals of H.M. Government relating to the constitutional development of India will not be acceptable to the Depressed Classes for the reasons which we placed before you at the interview. Since then we have had consultations with many of the Depressed Classes representatives in the various Provincial and the Central Legislatures and all of them have unanimously endorsed the view we placed before you regarding the proposals.

We are all of us absolutely convinced that the proposals are calculated to do the greatest harm to the Depressed Classes and are sure to place them under an unmitigated system of Hindu rule. Any such result which takes us back to the black days of the ancient past will never be tolerated by us and we are all determined to resist any such catastrophe befalling our people with all the means at our command.

We request you to convey to H.M. Government our deepest anxiety regarding the future of the Depressed Classes and to impress upon them that we must look upon it as breach of faith if His Majesty's Government should decide to force upon the Depressed Classes a constitution to which they have not given their free and voluntary

consent, and which does not contain within itself all the provisions that are necessary for safeguarding their interests.

In the end, we want to thank you for assuring us that you called us in our representative capacity and that H.M. Government did not regard the Depressed Classes as a minor party—points upon which some doubt had arisen in our mind and about which we asked you for a correct definition of our position.

## APPENDIX XIV

## JOINT MEMORANDUM

*The following is the Joint Memorandum of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr. M. R. Jayakar on the Cripps Declaration:-*

We observe from the draft declaration that excepting clause (e) there is very little in the declaration about the changes to be introduced in the constitution of the Government of India during the period of the war. It may be that instructions have been or may be issued to his Excellency the Viceroy to bring about the necessary changes in the composition and the constitution of the Executive Government.

If any such instructions have been issued, we are not aware of them, but we must point out that Indian opinion attaches the greatest importance to the transfer of real power in the Central Government at the present moment, and it is for this reason that we emphasize the necessity of the complete non-officialization of Government without the reservation of any portfolio during the interim period.

We have considered the terms of clause (e) as originally given to us and as subsequently amended by Sir Stafford Cripps. In the amended clause, we find it stated that, while His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the defence of India as a part of their world war effort, the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India. We have carefully considered the terms of this amended clause particularly in the light of the speech of Sir Stafford Cripps at the Press conference, a summary of which appeared in the Press on March 30, 1942. It is stated therein that Sir Stafford Cripps was emphatic that handing over political control and direction of defence, in the midst of the war, to the Indian Government would be fatal, and further that if Indian leaders insisted on absolute control over defence before accepting the scheme, then the scheme would fall through.

We realize that the transfer of absolute control over defence at the present juncture, when it is necessary that there should be unity of direction and control of military policy, would not be in the best interests of England and India. But we fail to see how this end will fail to be achieved by the appointment of an Indian Defence Member, who, we presume, will be a man possessed of a due sense of responsibility and would be only too willing to accept expert advice and to work in the closest co-operation with the War Cabinet.

While we appreciate the necessity of unity of policy and control in matters of defence, we think, in common with most of our countrymen, that the appointment of an Indian Member-in-charge of Defence, working in close association and co-operation with the War Cabinet and willing to accept expert advice, will be taken, at this stage, as an unmistakable token of the reality of the transfer of such power and as a symbol of the confidence of His Majesty's Government in the people of this country. We have no doubt that the object of His Majesty's Government is that the people of this country should

feel that this is their own war, but we feel that the requisite sense of responsibility for the defence of the country can best be stimulated by an appeal to their sense of pride and self-esteem, and by the two countries—England and India—completely identifying themselves with each other in the common cause of defending this country. We strongly hold that it would be a mistake to ignore the strength of the sentiment of the people on this subject.

We desire to state unequivocally that we are strongly in favour of the Indian people rendering every possible help in the successful prosecution of the war. At the same time, we feel equally clearly that in order to achieve that end, it is necessary that, during the period of the war, there should be an Indian Defence Member of the Council of the Governor-General. We are fully aware of the arguments to the contrary and we do not wish to overlook or minimize them; but we feel that the arguments in favour of the adoption of this step are overwhelming.

The adoption of an Indian Defence Member will have a great effect on Indian psychology. It will inspire the people with confidence and materially help in altering the present mentality of the people which, in our opinion, is not adequately zealous in the successful prosecution of the war. We do not in the slightest degree desire that there should be any conflict between his powers and those of the Commander-in-Chief in technical matters or in decisions about the movements or disposition of the troops or similar other matters. We think that the presence of such a member will, far from weakening the military position in India, strengthen it, and the political effects of this step will be very wholesome.

Besides, there are, in our opinion, large and inexhaustible resources of man-power remaining untapped in the youth of the country, which can be mobilized by methods which a Defence Member drawn from the people can alone effectively employ. His approach to this storehouse of strength will be by methods vitally different from those which the British official mind has hitherto employed with such little effect. The successful way in which the people of China, Russia and even the small Philippine islands have resisted the overwhelming forces of Japanese aggression, contrasted with the debacle in Malaya, Singapore and Rangoon graphically illustrates the difference between a struggle carried on by the people of a country under the direction of their own leaders and another pursued with the aid of a professional army guided and directed by officers who are drawn from a different race. We venture to suggest that, at this critical time, when the danger is daily approaching, the old-world ideas of keeping Indians in the perpetual position of unarmed helplessness and also the feelings of distrust and suspicion which have led to this policy, should be forthwith abandoned and a new era of hope and confidence inaugurated, leading to a joint effort by England and India on terms of mutual reliance, association and truthfulness. It is only such an association that would be productive of the maximum effort of this country, resulting eventually in a victory, based on the self-esteem, honour and willing sacrifice of a proud people.

On all these grounds, we desire strongly to press the inclusion of an Indian Defence Member in the Executive Council as otherwise, the declaration, whatever its other merits may be, will fail to achieve the object it is intended to serve. It should not, in our opinion, be difficult to define the spheres of activity of the Defence Member and of the Commander-in-Chief so as to avoid conflict; nor should it be difficult to secure close co-operation and co-ordination between the two.

"The second point to which we desire to advert relates to clause C (i) of the proposed declaration. While we recognize the justice of allowing any province of British India the liberty of remaining out

of the new constitution and of retaining its present constitutional position, we are not free from considerable doubt and anxiety about the wisdom of the further provision which makes it possible for another Federal Union being established. Such a Federal Union may, in certain conceivable circumstances, be a rival or hostile union. But apart from this, we cannot favour any step which may have the effect of breaking up the integrity of the country fostered by a long succession of Hindu and Muslim Emperors and a galaxy of British administrators. We are convinced that the creation of more than one Union, howsoever consistent in theory with the principle of self-determination, will be disastrous to the lasting interests of the country and to its integrity and security.

In the draft declaration which has been handed over to us we do not find any indication of the precise majority of votes which will be required in a provincial legislature to carry a resolution as to whether the province will or will not adhere to the union. We are, however, of the opinion that in a matter of this momentous character the method of bare majority cannot be adopted and that the majority required for any decision on this question should not be less than 65 p.c. of the Indian members of the Lower House at which the resolution is passed. We do not think that a decision in which the Indian population is primarily interested should be allowed to be influenced by the votes of European members to whom the question of remaining in one Federation or another cannot be of the same importance as it is to the Indian members. We are also strongly of the opinion that once this principle of a prescribed majority of votes in a legislature is accepted, it would not only be superfluous but might easily lead to grave social disorder if resort were to be had to the further device of a plebiscite of the adult population of the province. We feel that in the existing circumstances of the country, such a plebiscite, howsoever democratic in theory, is bound to lead to serious consequences, gravely disturbing peace and tranquillity not only in the province concerned, but in other areas to which the contagion may easily spread, leading to violent communal or religious conflicts. For these reasons we cannot conceal our grave concern as to the wisdom and expediency of provisions making it possible for some provinces to combine into a separate union.

We attach importance to the possibility of the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities coming to some mutual agreement before the cessation of hostilities—an agreement which may secure and safeguard the interests of all minorities by providing for (a) their representation in the legislature, (b) in the Government to be established, and (c) reservation to them of the fullest liberty in matters of conscience, religion and culture. If the contending parties begin to work together in a common cause during the interim period, they will, we hope, learn to appreciate one another's point of view, and a spirit of tolerance and confidence may be generated, conducive to a final settlement, which will secure the position of the minorities in the fullest measure without causing a disruption of the well-established integrity of the country:

If, however, all attempts during the intervening period to secure one Federal Union unhappily fail and the overwhelming wishes of the provinces to have a separate union are indicated through their legislatures, and the evils pointed above of having a separate union are prevented or mitigated, we have no objection to the experiment suggested in the draft declaration being made subject, of course, to what we have stated above.

Lastly, we desire to call attention to the necessity of the restoration in the provinces of a popular form of Government. There is no reference to this question in the draft declaration,

probably because it is intended to leave it for decision by the new Government which is to be established at the Centre. We consider, however, that the rule which at present prevails in so many provinces under Section 93 of the Government of India Act should be brought to an immediate end and their administration restored once more to popular control. If for the successful working of the Provincial Governments it should be necessary to establish coalition Governments, we would indeed welcome such an arrangement.

On all other points arising out of the draft declaration of Sir Stafford Cripps we do not wish to say anything more than that we are in general agreement with the line adopted by His Majesty's Government.

## APPENDIX XV.

### LATIF-AZAD CORRESPONDENCE

*Correspondence between Dr. Syed Abdul Latif and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on Congress attitude towards Muslim demands:*

#### DR. SYED ABDUL LATIF'S LETTER

Letter from Dr. Syed Abdul Latif of Hyderabad dated August 6, 1942:

Dear Maulana Sahib,

You may be aware that I have been endeavouring to seek, in my own way, a constitutional solution to the Hindu-Muslim problem. Lately some confusion appears to have arisen as regards the validity of a provision contained in the Congress Working Committee's resolution passed at Delhi at the time of the Cripps negotiation, which runs as follows:

"Nevertheless the Committee cannot think in terms of compelling any territorial unit against its declared and established will to remain within the Indian union."

The confusion has been caused by Mr. Jagat Narayan's resolution adopted by the A.I.C.C. at its last meeting held at Allahabad because that resolution has been taken generally to have nullified the above-mentioned provision in the Delhi resolution.

May I, therefore, ask for your authoritative ruling whether this interpretation is correct and whether Mr. Jagat Narayan's resolution has in any way modified or affected the said provision?

Further, you are reported in the Press to have made an offer that if the League were prepared to come to a settlement with the Congress the Congress Working Committee would appoint a few representatives to meet the League representatives for the purpose. May I know whether representatives of the League would in any way be debarred from discussing any proposals they might put forward for a permanent settlement of the communal problem?

Yours sincerely,  
(Sd.) S. A. Latif.

#### MAULANA AZAD'S REPLY

Letter from Maulana Abul Kalam Azad dated August 6, 1942:  
Dear Dr. Abdul Latif,

I appreciate your interest in raising the questions contained in your letter dated the 6th.

Had the speeches of responsible members of the Working Committee been duly noted in the Press the confusion to which you refer

in your first question would not have arisen. It was made fully clear by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Nehru and myself at the time and I repeat it now that no part of the Delhi resolution to which you refer has in any way been affected or modified by any subsequent resolution of the A.-I.C.C. In fact, the Delhi resolution was confirmed by the A.-I.C.C.

With reference to your second question, it was never contemplated that the examination and discussion of the viewpoints of the representatives of the two organizations should not be free, frank and full; in fact, it was fully understood that these representatives would in no way be under any restriction in their deliberations and discussions subject only to the usual condition that their agreed decision would be submitted to their respective bodies for ratification.

Yours sincerely,  
(Sd.) A. K. Azad.

#### PANDIT JAWAHARLAL'S REPLY

Pandit Jawaharlal's reply to a letter from Dr. Syed Abdul Latif of Hyderabad:-

Dear Mr. Abdul Latif,

I have your letter of today's date. You have informed me that you have written a similar letter to the Congress President and you have been good enough to tell me his reply. It is hardly necessary for me to add anything to Maulana Azad's reply which is fully authoritative. I need only say, if I may venture to do so, that I wholly agree with it.

The Congress position in regard to the proposal to divide up India into two or more parts is that any such division will be exceedingly harmful to both parts as well as to India as a whole. I am personally convinced that probably our Muslim friends in the north-west of India will suffer most from such a division. India, as it is, contains nearly all the important elements and resources that can make her a strong and more or less self-sufficient nation. To cut her up will be, from the economic point of view as well as others, a fatal thing breaking up that natural economic unity and weakening each part. The north will suffer most from this because it is industrially not so advanced, nor does it contain some of the essential raw materials that are so necessary for a modern nation. There are many other arguments against division but I need not go into them as you are well aware of them yourself. There are of course also the sentimental, historical and psychological arguments which, as you know, affect the people powerfully.

It is for all these reasons that there is a very strong feeling amongst us, and, we believe, amongst vast numbers of people in India, against any division of India. All these arguments are reinforced by recent world history and in fact by the course of the war itself. This has shown that small nations have no future before them except as hangers-on of larger nations. We do not want India or any part of India to be such a hanger-on, or a kind of semi-colonial dependency, political or economic, of any other nation. In fact the tendency in the world is for larger federations to come into existence. Personally I am convinced that the ultimate solution will lie in a world federation and I am happy that a lead towards this has been given in the resolution that is going to be placed before the All-India Congress Committee tomorrow. Such a world federation will help in the solution of many vital problems and, among others, even the problem of national or other minorities will take a different shape.

In the resolution referred to above you will also find the Congress position in regard to a federation clearly defined. It is stated that India should have a federal government with the largest possible autonomy for the federating units, and further that residuary powers



should vest in these federating units. Personally, I must confess to you that I am not enamoured of this as I think the modern tendency is against it and rightly so.

It is essential today to have a planned economy for the nation, and for this as well as for defence, etc., a strong Central Government is necessary. Nevertheless we have agreed to this to meet the wishes of many of our friends who consider it important. I might add that this is no new decision of the Congress as a similar decision was arrived at 11 years ago.

Thus, generally speaking, the Congress stands firmly for the unity of India and a federation with a great deal of autonomy for the units. For this objective it works. Nevertheless at Delhi it made it perfectly clear that if any territorial unit was emphatically and clearly of the opinion that it should break with the Indian union, it should not be compelled to act contrary to its wishes. Naturally this would not be welcomed by us and it would inevitably depend on certain geographical and other factors. That decision of the Congress Working Committee stands and nothing has been said or done to modify or vary it in any way. When Babu Jagat Narayan Lal's resolution came at the A.I.C.C. meeting in Allahabad, this was made perfectly clear by the Congress President, by me and by others. The wording of that resolution expresses the general wish and policy of the Congress which has been the basis of our constitution and working ever since the Congress came into existence. There is nothing really new in it. This resolution does not in any way override the Delhi Working Committee's resolution. This is perfectly clear and, beyond doubt.

Of course if representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League meet together they are free to discuss any matter and to refer such matters as they choose to their parent bodies for decision.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) Jawaharlal Nehru.

## APPENDIX XVI

### AUGUST DECLARATION

*The following is the text of the Declaration made by the Viceroy of India on August 8, 1940, commonly known as the August Declaration:*

India's anxiety at this moment of critical importance in the world struggle against tyranny and aggression to contribute to the full to the common cause and to the triumph of our common ideals is manifest. She has already made a mighty contribution. She is anxious to make a greater contribution still. His Majesty's Government are deeply concerned that that unity of national purpose in India which would enable her to do so should be achieved at as early a moment as possible. They feel that some further statement of their intentions may help to promote that unity. In that hope they have authorized me to make the present statement.

Last October His Majesty's Government again made it clear that Dominion Status was their objective for India. They added that they were ready to authorize the expansion of the Governor-General's Council to include a certain number of representatives of political parties, and they proposed the establishment of a consultative committee. In order to facilitate harmonious co-operation it was obvious that some measure of agreement in the provinces between the major parties was a desirable prerequisite to their joint collaboration at the Centre. Such agreement was unfortunately not reached, and in the circumstances no progress was then possible.

During the earlier part of this year, I continued my efforts to bring political parties together. In these last few weeks, I again entered into conversations with prominent political personages in British India and the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, the results of which have been reported to His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Government have also seen the resolutions passed by the Congress Working Committee, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha.

It is clear that the earlier differences which had prevented the achievement of national unity remain unbridged. Deeply as His Majesty's Government regret this, they do not feel that they should any longer, because of these differences, postpone the expansion of the Governor-General's Council, and the establishment of a body which will more closely associate Indian public opinion with the conduct of the war by the Central Government. They have authorized me accordingly to invite a certain number of representative Indians to join my Executive Council. They have authorized me further to establish a War Advisory Council which would meet at regular intervals, and which would contain representatives of the Indian States and of other interests in the national life of India as a whole.

The conversations which have taken place and the resolutions of the bodies which I have just mentioned make it clear, however, that there is still in certain quarters doubt as to the intentions of His Majesty's Government for the constitutional future of India, and that there is doubt, too, as to whether the position of minorities, whether political or religious, is sufficiently safeguarded in relation to any constitutional change by the assurance already given. There are two main points which have emerged. On those two points, His Majesty's Government now desire me to make their position clear.

The first is as to the position of minorities in relation to any future constitutional scheme. It has already been made clear that my declaration of last October does not exclude examination of any part either of the Act of 1935 or of the policy and plans on which it is based. His Majesty's Government's concern that full weight should be given to the views of the minorities in any revision has also been brought out. That remains the position of His Majesty's Government.

It goes without saying that they could not contemplate the transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a government.

The second point of general interest is the machinery for building within the British Commonwealth of Nations a new constitutional scheme when the time comes. There has been very strong insistence that the framing of that scheme should be primarily the responsibility of Indians themselves, and should originate from Indian conceptions of social, economic and political structure of Indian life. His Majesty's Government are in sympathy with that desire, and wish to see it given the fullest practical expression subject to the due fulfilment of the obligations which Great Britain's long connection with India has imposed upon her and for which His Majesty's Government cannot divest themselves of responsibility.

It is clear that a moment when the Commonwealth is engaged in a struggle for existence is not one in which fundamental constitutional issues can be decisively resolved. But His Majesty's Government authorize me to declare that they will most readily assent to the setting up after the conclusion of the war with the least possible delay of a body representative of the principal elements in India's

national life in order to devise the framework of the new constitution, and they will lend every aid in their power to hasten decisions on all relevant matters to the utmost degree.

Meanwhile, they will welcome and promote, in any way possible, every sincere and practical step that may be taken by representative Indians themselves to reach a basis of friendly agreement, firstly, on the form which the post-war representative body should take, and the methods by which it should arrive at its conclusions, and, secondly, upon the principles and outlines of the constitution itself.

They trust, however, that for the period of the war (with the Central Government reconstituted and strengthened in the manner I have described and with the help of the War Advisory Council) all parties, communities and interests will combine and co-operate in making a notable Indian contribution to the victory of the world cause which is at stake. Moreover, they hope that in this process new bonds of union and understanding will emerge and thus pave the way towards the attainment by India of that free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth which remains the proclaimed and accepted goal of the Imperial Crown and of the British Parliament.

## APPENDIX XVII

### A.I.C.C. RESOLUTION

*The following is the text of the resolution passed by the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay on Saturday, August 8, 1942:*

The All-India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government, and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad. The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution, and is of opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

The Committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the situation on the Russian and Chinese fronts and conveys to the Russian and Chinese peoples its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom. This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom and who sympathize with the victims of aggression, to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which have led to repeated and disastrous failure. It is not by adhering to such aims and policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on the domination of subject and Colonial countries, and the continuation of the Imperialist tradition and method. The possession of Empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern Imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the peoples of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm.

The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the future of the war and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism.

This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war, but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British Imperialism and the taint of that Imperialism will affect the fortunes of the United Nations.

The peril of today, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war.

The A.I.C.C., therefore, repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a provisional Government will be formed, and free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The provisional Government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus be a composite Government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its Allied Powers, and to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The provisional Government will evolve a scheme for a Constituent Assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to this freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other Colonial Power.

While the A.I.C.C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a world federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a world federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a world federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries, national armies, navies and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a world federal defence force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

An independent India would gladly join such a world federation and co-operate on an equal basis with other countries in the solution of international problems.

Such a federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the war, however, the federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the war, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

The Committee regretfully realizes, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the Governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards world federation. The reactions of the British Government and the misguided criticisms of the foreign Press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations. The earnest appeal of the Working Committee to Great Britain and the United Nations has so far met with no response, and the criticisms made in many foreign quarters have shown an ignorance of India's and the world's need, and sometimes even hostility to India's freedom, which is significant of a mentality of domination and racial superiority which cannot be tolerated by a proud people conscious of their strength and of the justice of their cause.

The A.I.C.C. would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian Government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction, for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji, and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committees can function. When this happens, every man or woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

Lastly, whilst the A.I.C.C. has stated its own view of the future governance under free India, the A.I.C.C. wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on a mass struggle, it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India.

